

The Old Orchard

By Mack Cloie



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The Old Orchard



BY

MACK CLOIE

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1903

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“FOR there is seldom any wrong-doing which does not carry along with it some downfall of blindly climbing hopes, some hard entail of suffering, some quickly satiated desire that survives, with the life in death of old paralytic vice, to see itself cursed by its woeful progeny—some tragic mark of kinship in the one brief life to the far-stretching life that went before, and to the life that is to come after, such as has raised the pity and terror of men ever since they began to discern between will and destiny. But these things are often unknown to the world ; for there is much pain that is quite noiseless ; and vibrations that make human agonies are often a mere whisper in the roar of hurrying existence. There are glances of hatred that stab and raise no cry of murder ; robberies that leave man or woman forever beggared of peace and joy, yet kept secret by the sufferer—committed to no sound except that of low moans in the night, seen in no writing except that made on the face by slow months of suppressed anguish and early morning tears. Many an inherited sorrow that has marred a life has been breathed into no human ear.”—*George Eliot.*

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

—*In Memoriam.*

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Book I.

BLOSSOMS.

I.

A RELIC.

ONE of the most common relics to be seen in Western Ontario, reminding one of a bygone social condition, is the old wayside tavern. Sometimes it stands clad in shabby gray siding, crooked and weather-beaten. Sometimes its walls present a bold, rough face of field granite and limestone, chosen without respect to size or color. In another place it is of old red brick, as though blushing with conscious shame for its previous, and now for the most part hidden, record. But, appearing as it may, it suggests the fearful prevalence of the use of strong drink in rural places a generation ago. On every leading highway these old "stands" are yet to be seen in all stages of disintegration. Many of them still remain on the main roads leading toward the city of London, for along there, in the early days, the settlers brought in their resources of grain, timber, and furs.

One of these taverns, which, after passing through various evolutionary stages, became known at length as "The Briton's Lodge," we shall have to look at many times in the course of our story. It stood on a corner where a concession met the gravel road, along which hundreds of teams passed daily. The old tavern has perished, and no one who is acquainted with its record mourns its disappearance, nor wishes that it could be resurrected from the heap of ashes that remains.

It was after the noon hour of a particularly warm day in June; such a day as the rustic, panting with all his aerating capacity as he toils at "making hay," describes laconically as a "scorcher." The new-mown grass wilted, then became crisp. The cattle sought the friendly shade of all the available trees of the pasture. Robins having a family to provide for might be seen resting a moment on a bough, with loosely opened wings and gaping bill. The air rang with the crooning of crickets and the crackle of brown grasshoppers; while the bumble-bee hummed by in his glory, laden with the rich spoils of his morning forage. Over the dry roofs, upon which the vertical sun had glared for hours, the apparent quivering of the atmosphere gave evidence of the intensity of the heat.

The inmates of "The Briton's Lodge," the tavern referred to, had also made concessions to the superior powers of "Old Sol," and had hidden themselves in the rooms farthest removed from his undulatory influence. The proprietor was taking his afternoon nap, yielding probably not only to the influence of "Old Sol," but

also to the somniferous influence of "Old Rye." At any rate he slept soundly, occasionally varying the order of sleep with a dozen or so of heavy drawn snores. Jimmie, the one-armed hostler, was sitting in the bar-room, dozing in one of the large yellow arm-chairs, which propped him up on all sides except the front; but as he had braced his feet in another chair opposite, he felt as secure in this accustomed position as the proprietor on his broad couch.

"The Briton's Lodge" had a history. Originally it was built of large logs, which were hewn to a uniform thickness; and the outside of the four walls was indeed a piece of skilful handiwork. When old Joe Wardell "opened bar" here, he was considered one of the great men of the road. Such greatness must, of course, be estimated by its relation to popular social standards of the day.

The house next fell into the hands of a man who finished it outside with fine pine siding, replaced the old stone fire-place with one of red brick, put two Gothic windows in the front roof, added a broad platform all along the front of the house, and had a new pine pump put in the well on the corner. Such conveniences were not very common at the time, and induced many travellers to stop "to water." Many of the older men who did their "teaming" along this road, and not being used to the confinement and jolting of the wagon, found this a convenient place to get out to "stretch their legs." This calisthenic exercise generally brought them into the bar-room. In some cases their legs were "stretched" beyond

endurance, and refused to carry them back to the wagon.

At a still later period the property came into possession of the enterprising speculator who still fulfilled the functions of landlord at the time of opening this story. He had seen a good deal of life in the southern States; he knew something of city life and city hotels, and therefore was able to throw the glamor of additional attractions around his bar. These appeared in the form of a large oblong mirror placed behind the bottles, a fancy match-box, set with brass nails as a matter of economy, as well as new styles in bottles and glasses. It was also asserted of him that he could "mix drinks to beat everything." The walls of the bar-room were now decorated with new pictures bordering on the obscene, the portraits of the leading pugilists, and cuts of the fastest horses then known. The windows were shaded by a peculiar kind of slat blind, and a green portable screen was placed opposite the door, within the bar-room.

Without, the small stable was enlarged to a barn, adjoining which was a cattle yard, surrounded on all sides by an open shed. A new "hall" was built adjoining the tavern on the north, and the floor was sufficiently elevated to make a convenient "driving-shed" for the public. Close within the corner of the shed, at the end of the platform, another well was dug and a pump added. Thus in material outfit, both inside and out, "The Briton's Lodge" was completed. The large circular sign, mounted on a stout

post, had been repainted, and now bore the name of "D. STENSON, PROP." underneath the title, which he had bestowed on the tavern.

Travellers were thus made welcome at "The Briton's Lodge"; also the male portion of the population, and, in a few unhappy cases, the women as well! Here terrible fights took place between the strong fellows of rival gangs of timbermen, or between the champions of different local villages. At this bar father and son had drunk with each other until intoxicated, and had then fought while the crowd looked on amused. In this bar-room, in more recent times, the drunkard's wife had vainly pleaded with the hard-faced landlord to sell no more drink to her husband, and she had found herself laughed at when she threatened to resort to the "law." The young came here, innocent, unsuspecting, uncontaminated. They were welcomed, warmed, treated, and cajoled into a liking for the place. At "The Briton's Lodge" fortunes had been lost, characters lost, lives lost, eternities lost!

It was all a splendid game for the landlord, who passed a very sociable life, and had made wealth; but somehow the wealth had not stayed with him. Whether it had taken to itself the proverbial "wings," or whether moral corrosives had gradually eaten into it and reduced its bulk, certain it is that he was not very wealthy at the time at which this story opens. He made it known sometimes in a confidential way that he had "seen better days." He would also admit that he had "to put up with a

good deal" in his way, when he had particularly "rough nights." But even those nights had had their compensation. At times he retailed amusing incidents to his customers, of particularly "good nights," or "good deals," or, thinking of these affairs lying upon his bed at night, he consoled himself into comfortable sleep.

II.

WHERE PATHWAYS CROSS.

ABOUT two miles north of the "The Briton's Lodge" lay the village of Bellheath, where the parsonage, occupied by Rev. Hiram Stafford, was located. On this particular afternoon an old man entered the village, coming from the north. He only paused to inquire his way to the minister's residence, which was the last house at the south end of the village. He wore light summer clothing, and his general appearance saved him from the suspicion of being an ordinary tramp. His iron-gray hair, which had once been black and curly, reached to his coat collar; and his broad brimmed gray hat gave a somewhat grotesque appearance to his tall figure. On a sturdy cane of strange wood he carried a strong leather bag that had the appearance of being filled with heavy materials, and there was a noticeable stoop to his shoulders.

Having reached the parsonage gate, the stranger was about to enter, when he observed the minister and one of his daughters entering the phaeton preparatory to departure. He politely opened the gate to allow them to pass out, but the minister drew up his horse and inquired if the stranger desired anything.

"Nothing more than to sell you a book, perhaps," said the stranger; "but I can call later."

"I shall be pleased to look at what you have," replied Mr. Stafford. "Call another time; I am going out to-day."

After closing the gate, the stranger followed the vehicle with his eyes as it moved away toward the village post-office. Then he took the way leading towards "The Briton's Lodge." Having reached the tavern, the stranger took a cool drink at the pump close to the drive-shed, and then moved his bag and cane over to the long seat that always stood on the platform in summer-time, where he sat down and appeared to drop into a reverie. Even Rowdy, the white bulldog, the sole animate possession of Jimmie, took no more notice of the stranger than to lift his head, blink his red eyes, and drop back again to a sleep, which the flies brought to uncertain endings.

The rattle of a heavy wagon approaching did not appear to disturb the stranger's reverie. It stopped in front of the tavern, and a young man of ponderous weight sprang down on the platform, shaking it for half its length, uttering a wild whoop as he leaped. Rowdy, the bulldog, sprang up, barked, and braced himself as though facing an enemy, all the while growling and showing a dangerous armament of teeth. He and the stranger had met before.

"Git——you——white——;" roared the burly, red-haired newcomer, at the same time bringing down his heavy foot with a thundering stamp on the platform.

But Rowdy was true to his breed. He had no intention of running away. His growl swelled to a

deep roar, while his sturdy muscles stood out like whip-cords. In another moment he would have bounded on the stranger; but the noise had aroused Jimmie, who rushed out in time to seize the dog's brass collar and prevent a battle. Then he hid Rowdy.

"Jimmie," said the young man, "I'll kill that infernal pug one of these days for his impudence. What good is he? Why don't you make soap-grease of him?"

"Well, Steve," replied Jimmie, "if you had not kicked him the first time you saw him on this platform I think he wouldn't ever had minded you; but Rowdy never forgets a kindness, and never forgives a kick."

"I'll give him one some of these days he will never forget," replied Steve; "but never mind it now; just give the horses a drink, and then come and have one yourself."

"None for me," answered Jimmie, taking up the pail to water the horses. He did not like Steve's remarks about his dog. He knew Steve, and knew nothing very good about him, but he restrained angry words.

Steve followed him over to the pump, and asked, "Who's this long-wooled duffer on the bench?"

"Don't know," replied Jimmie. "Don't know when he got here, nor where he came from. I did not see him till I came out just now to stop Rowdy."

With a muttered curse on the dog, Steve walked over to the bench, and addressed the old stranger. "Well, old man, pretty hot day, ain't it? You look

kind of dry. Better come in and have something to cool you down."

The old man had appeared to take little notice of the fracas with the dog, but in reality had noted it in detail, and he had "sized up" Steve. He now roused himself, and looking up at the noisy newcomer said, "Thank you, I have had something to cool me," pointing to the pump.

Steve received this reply as a pretence on the part of the old man to cover his real pleasure at the prospect of a treat, so he took to banter. "Oh, you take nothing but 'clear, sparklin' water,' as the temperance fellows say. I've noticed that most of the chaps like you that go 'round footin' it are very choice about their drinks. You have to pull them up to the bar; they are so bashful. Very temperate, you bet! Perhaps you're one of the prohibition stumpers, and could make us a speech. I suppose this old bag of yours never carried a drop."

"No," replied the stranger, in a rising tone; "it never did, and never shall."

"I'm sure I believe you," said Steve. "There's not even an empty bottle in it now." As he said this he tipped the bag off the bench and gave it a kick that rolled it off the platform, but there was no clink of empty glass.

If Steve had not been blinded with conceit and liquor he might have observed a warning look on the old man's features. He saw nothing, however, but his own unmanly fun in the affair. Then he said, "Come, old chap, let's have a beer and a smoke.

You know you're only gassin', and your throat is crackin' for a wetter."

"I told you I did not drink. Leave me alone, or it may be the worse for you," said the stranger. Then Steve, with a coarse laugh at the stranger's irritation, went toward the bar-room, calling to his companion, "Come, Black, and wet your whistle." The landlord had been awakened by the noise and was already behind the bar, over which he extended "the glad hand," with the greeting, "Well, Steve, old boy, you've got back."

Steve Fitzhugh was a bully. Within a radius of ten miles, and even in police quarters in the city, he was known as such. He was fond of fighting, even when sober, but when drinking it became an irrepressible passion. At such times his strong combative proclivity overcame whatever sense of manly honor he ordinarily possessed, and he would abuse anyone, without respect to youth, age, or even physical deformity. When he was about eighteen years of age it had been his evil fortune to gain the victory in a fight with an older man who had some reputation as a pugilist. After this his pugnacious nature ran riot, and he was into quarrels everywhere, and generally came out victorious. For two summers he had been sailing, and while his vessel lay at Harbor Sands, undergoing repairs, he took a run home. His parents were consistent Christians, and were deserving of more honor than Steve had ever shown them. They had shown him a "better way," and he had chosen an evil way in preference.

His companion to-day was Jeremiah Blackrock, commonly called "Jerry Black," or "Jerry," a short, thick-set man, with full black beard, perhaps fifty years of age. He had met with Steve in the city, and their homes being close together, Jerry had brought the latter with him.

While Steve and Jerry were in the bar-room, a young man and young woman, both mounted on Indian ponies that carried costly riding outfits, approached from another direction. They cantered over to the shed to give the ponies a drink, and the young man alighted. He was a tall, slender, athletic fellow, with a heavy shock of dark yellow hair, and deep blue eyes. The young lady was almost a complete contrast. She was of medium height, with heavy black hair and dark lustrous eyes. One who did not know them would not have suspected that Arthur and Kate Medford were brother and sister.

After helping the young lady to a drink of the cool water, the young man took one himself. Then he walked over to Jimmie, and dropped a coin in his hand, saying, "I don't go to the bar, Jimmie; so take this for four drinks."

To reach Jimmie the young man had to pass the stranger, who had been furtively observing the young people; and now he obtained a close view of Arthur. They, however, took little notice of the old man, as such pedestrians were common enough on this road. As Arthur remounted, the stranger's eyes were fixed intently upon Kate, but no one observed his keen scrutiny of the girl's features. After they had moved

away his face grew pale ; he gripped his cane with one hand and the arm of the bench with the other. For a few moments his brain swam, and he almost fainted. But he controlled himself, and rising, walked slowly to the pump. His eyes fell on a large gold button, which he picked up, and having looked at it a moment, slipped it into his pocket. Then, having taken more water, he resumed his seat. Jimmie was sitting at the other end of the bench, turning over in his mind Steve's threat against Rowdy, and was endeavoring to work out a plan to protect his dog.

Turning to Jimmie, the stranger asked : "Do you know that young man ?"

"I do," replied Jimmie, "both of them, both Arthur and his sister. That's his name, and her's is Kate. They live along the road, and down a bit, not more'n two mile, with their mother. She is a widow, and a grand woman, too, she is."

"What is the name ?" asked the stranger.

"Medford," replied Jimmie. "Her man was Arthur Medford, and the boy's called for his father. I think the girl's older'n Arthur, but I'm not sure. The father's dead some years back. Kate just got home a few days since from a ladies' school. Arthur grew too quick when at school, and is staying at home this year trying to make up strong ; and so he is. I'm glad, for he's a fine lad, is Arthur. Most people think a lot of him, and, in fact, the whole family. He's a great friend of the school-teacher's here, Doctor Sam, as we all call him. Out of school hours they spend a good deal of time together. If Arthur ain't

at Sam's place, why Sam is sure to be at his'n. I think they are both going to learn to be doctors after awhile, though some says Arthur talks of joining the army. So I dunno how it'll go yet."

Jimmie's informative talk was now interrupted by the appearance of two school urchins, who had come to the tavern pump to obtain a pailful of cool, fresh water for the use of the scholars. One of these was Ben Wiley, and his companion was an English emigrant boy who called himself, "Jokah Bawn;" and in any future reference we may make to the latter, we shall also call him "Joker." It fell to the lot of these two lads to perform this task, a delightful one to them both.

"I have lost a cuff button, Jimmie. Did you see anything of it?"

Looking in the direction of the voice, Jimmie noticed that Arthur Medford had returned. He went over to him, and they began a search for the button.

"I do not know how I shall meet mother if I do not find it," said Arthur. "It is one of a pair of my father's. I would not have taken any money for it."

The stranger was observing them now. He was pleased with the reference Arthur had made to his mother. He was about to hand over the button to Arthur, when Steve came out of the bar-room again, followed by Jerry. Steve carried a large long glass full of a foaming beverage, and he walked over to where the old stranger sat.

III.

A STRANGER'S DEFENCE.

"HERE, old fellow," said Steve to the stranger, "you would not come in for a drink, so I brought it out to you; drink my health."

"No, thank you, young man," said the stranger. "If I were in the habit of drinking perhaps I would drink with you; but I am not."

"No good," replied Steve. "You must take it after me paying for it and playing the waiter to bring it to you. Why, you don't know who I am, or you would think yourself honored. You must drink or I'll pour it down your windpipe." As he said this he laid his large hand on the old man's shoulder, and throwing his weight upon it, wedged him into the corner of the seat, and with the other placed the glass to his lips, laughing as he did so; but the old man's lips were firmly closed.

Steve, seeing that he was determined not to drink, became annoyed at his refusal, and tipping up the glass, poured the contents over the old man's face. The next instant the glass was dashed from the bully's hand out into the road, where it smashed into fragments, and Arthur Medford confronted him.

"That's a mean, unmanly trick," said Arthur, his

deep blue eyes flashing with indignation. "Shame! Don't you see you are abusing an old man?"

"What's it your business, you young snob?" replied Steve. "You close up your head, or I'll duck you in the horse-trough. If you don't want your dandy shirt dirtied, just keep quiet, I say."

"I will not keep quiet," replied Arthur. "No man should keep quiet in such a case as this. A manly man would not do what you have done to this old man."

"Then, according to what you say, I am not a manly man," replied Steve. "There's not many fellows that would be so bold to Steve Fitzhugh, and if you were not a boy I'd smash you. But I'm going to take some of that conceit out of you right here and now, and it will teach you good manners for time to come. You've got to go to the bottom of that horse-trough. It will spoil your nice shirt; so take off your coat, or in it goes too."

"We shall see about that," said Arthur, as he stepped back under the shed to lay aside his upper garments.

The truth was that Steve had enough liquor in him to make him anxious for a fight. There was no man present, of course, who could stand before him one minute; but it would be some gratification to duck this young fellow in the horse-trough, and afterwards perhaps "cuff his ears." On the other hand, Arthur saw himself confronted by a giant and a known pugilist. He quickly laid his plan. He would endeavor to meet superior strength by quickness of

action. Having decided thus, he sprang again on the platform. Truth to tell, Steve was surprised to find Arthur so willing to come back, but he disdained to take off his coat to "handle a boy."

"Are you ready?" asked Steve.

"Ready," replied Arthur. The next instant he had closed in on Steve, and had wrapped his long sinewy arms around his body like a band of steel. A desperate struggle now began.

Steve tried hard to shake him off, but could not. Arthur clung to him with a terrible grip. Steve then tried to crush Arthur down, by throwing his weight sideways upon him. This gave Arthur the opportunity he wanted. The shock of yellow hair was now almost hidden beneath the giant's arm. This was the moment. Suddenly Steve's huge body rose two feet in the air, and came down quite close to the horse-trough. Not a moment did Arthur lose, but taking advantage of the rebound of Steve's weight from the planks, he lifted him again, and swung backwards. Both fell this time, and Steve's calves catching the end of the trough, he fell backwards within it, and Arthur without. Steve, of course, was almost submerged, and Arthur, too, was wet from the side splash; but he was victor, and he quickly withdrew to the shed.

It took Steve a few moments to struggle out of the close-fitting box, and then began a scene of choking, spitting, cursing, and indescribable disorder. What! He, Steve Fitzhugh, who could thrash any six men in the county at a time, thrown into a horse-trough!

Nothing was great enough to swear by. As he rose out of the trough, Rowdy, who had jumped through the window of the back room where Jimmie had imprisoned him, bounded along the platform, and seizing his trousers, tore one leg up to the knee. He would have torn the flesh, too, had not Jimmie sprang forward, and carried him off, this time dropping him down into the dark cellar under the bar-room. The incident only added to Steve's fury. He resolved to thrash everyone around the place, and thus demonstrate his ability to sustain his reputation. He espied Arthur in the shed, and rushed toward him.

But now the old stranger sprang up alert as a youth. He had watched the struggle over the horse-trough, quite confident that the younger man would win; but he determined that Arthur's part must end there. He would not allow this bully to abuse an unoffending youth, who had been drawn into the trouble in defence of himself.

"You must not touch this young man any further," said he to Steve, as he came forward. It was the stranger's turn to command.

"Who will stop me, I want to know?" called out the bully.

"I will," was the reply, and Steve observed that his arms were placed for battle. His attention was now all given to the old man, and, amazed at his changed attitude and his defiance, he could not speak for rage. He rushed at him with a clenched fist raised to strike.

With the quickness of a professional the old man

side-stepped, and as he did so he swung his right hand with terrible force against the other's face. There was a sound like the crack of a pistol, and Steve went to the ground with a broken jaw.

He got up quickly, and turning toward the old man, lowered his head and came at him again like a Spanish bull rushing on a matadore ; but this action only rendered him the easier game. The old man quietly but cautiously stepped to the other side this time, and repeated the blow on Steve's ear, with the other hand. Again Steve went down, and blood began to flow freely from his nose and mouth. He struggled to his feet again, and tried another rush. The old man appeared to think it was time to end such an unseemly affair, which all present saw could have only one ending, and this time he struck out with all the force he could command. Steve fell like a stricken ox, his face and clothes covered with blood and the filth of the shed.

The fight was over. Steve Fitzhugh had at last met his superior. His defeat was so complete as to leave no room for a single doubt or question.

Jerry Blackrock had witnessed the fight from where he stood near the horses. When the last blow was struck he sprang into the wagon, turned the team toward home, and having lashed them into a gallop, did not allow them to slacken speed until he had reached his own gate. Two or three times he looked behind him fearfully, like a man pursued by evil spirits. His wife, hearing the unusual rattle of the wagon, came out to inquire whether anything were wrong.

"Yes, wrong enough, Barbara," replied Jerry to her question.

"You look pale, Jerry," said his wife, in a nervous tone.

"Perhaps I am, and not much wonder either," he answered. Then in a low, excited manner he told her what had happened at the tavern, and closed by saying, "It was no mortal man struck down Steve. It was a spirit, as sure as we are talking, Barbara." While speaking to her, his eyes had dilated to a look of terrified wildness.

"What do you mean, Jerry?" cried his wife. "Your looks frighten me! Whose spirit do you mean?"

Here Jerry came close to his wife and whispered a name. His superstitious fears were very much aroused. Far back in the years Jerry had known a face. That face had flashed before his vision again this afternoon like a gleam of lightning from a cloud at night. So unlooked for was the appearance that he imagined he had looked on one who had come back from the dead.

"Where did he come from, Jerry?" asked his wife.

"Jimmie told us he did not see him coming," replied Jerry. "He did not hear him, and his dog made no noise either. He was sitting on the bench when we drove up to the tavern. I took no notice of him till Steve got into the fight with him. All at once it came to me who he was, or whose spirit it was. His hair is long and gray, but I knew his eyes. And the way he knocked Steve! I hope he has not

killed him, Barbara" (and here his voice became husky). "He has found us at last, or else his spirit has."

"Oh! Jerry you are mistaken," argued Barbara.

"No; I'm not mistaken, Barbara," replied Jerry. "It's one or the other." Then he lashed the horses over the legs with the ends of the lines and rushed them on a canter over to the stable, while his wife returned to the house. Her mind was troubled, but her face was set hard. As she moved about the house, the face that Jerry's narrative had so vividly recalled to her mind appeared to be looking in at the windows upon her in every room she entered.

IV.

A RURAL SENSATION.

THE two boys, Ben and Joker, had witnessed the fight. When Steve Fitzhugh trailed himself to the horse-trough to have a second bath, Joker's actions assumed a degree of ambiguity and curiousness that required a keener analysis than anyone present, excepting Steve, could bring to bear on them so that they might be understood. He uttered one wild whoop, and then putting his hands to the platform turned a complete somersault into the white dust of the road, then he turned and performed the feat back again to the platform. Next he turned the pail upside down and performed the feat of standing on his head on the bottom of it. Next he sprang up the pump and performed the same feat on the flat top, coming down again with the agility of a young monkey.

By this time, Ben, who had been terrified by the fight, was holding his little sides laughing at Joker's acrobatic performance. "Joker, what do mean?" he cried. "Take care; you'll break your neck." But when Joker stood once more on the platform, the way he laughed, as he bent forward toward Steve with his hands placed one upon each knee! He then

affected a lugubrious attitude, placing his hand to his head, which he inclined to one side, and cried out piteously, "Oh, my head! Oh, my nose!" (catching hold of that organ). "Oh, I am so badly licked! Oh, I am so dizzy! I'm falling! Hold me up! Help! Enough! Pull him off!" He staggered over, and fell against the wall of the tavern, apparently in great distress and exhaustion.

Steve had observed him, and he knew what it all meant. He and Joker had met before; but his jaw was too painful to permit the luxury of cursing him. He could only register a vow of future vengeance.

How far the lad's tricks might have gone would be difficult to say, had not the landlord ordered the boys to leave at once; so taking their pail of water, they returned to the school. The teacher, whom Jimmie had spoken of as "Doctor Sam," asked them the cause of their delay.

"There was a row at the corner," replied Joker.

"And were you in it?" asked the teacher.

"No, sir," replied Joker; "but I'd like to have been in it," and as he spoke he straightened up with great dignity. At this show of valor the other scholars, who had been listening intently, broke into a loud laugh, and even the teacher had to smile. Not caring to inquire into the details of the trouble, he commanded the boys to take their seats.

At recess the other boys flocked around Ben and Joker and heard the wonderful story of the strange old man having defeated Steve. When four o'clock came they could scarcely get out of the school quickly

enough, and several straw hats were torn in the hurried effort to get them off the hooks. Then there was a race for the corner, the best runners gaining ground on the others. The girls were more careful, and moved to the dreaded corner in a solid body. Near the tavern they halted to reconnoitre, and called to the boys to inquire if they might go on.

"No danger; come on!" called back the boys, who had got to the corner first. Some of them were returning rather disgusted, and declaring that Ben and Joker had played them a trick.

Steve had been driven to his home by the landlord, and while "the boss" was absent, Jimmie had worked hard to remove all traces of the struggle. Arthur had returned to where he left Kate, so that the school-children saw nothing at the corner except an old man with stooped shoulders, sitting on the bench, and Rowdy, the bull-dog, lying at his feet.

But this much they had seen, and it agreed in part with the story of Ben and Joker, which they repeated in their homes that evening. Many men who believed that something unusual had happened at the tavern made the excuse of coming out that evening for their mail; for it is strange, sometimes even amusing, to see the interest that even good and moral people take in some incident by which the destructive forces have been put into operation. When Jimmie was questioned that evening he confirmed the story of the boys. The landlord, however, did not want to say much about it.

Dave Stenson was puzzled a good deal over this

strange old man, who appeared to have dropped down on this little spot of earth, or else had risen out of it. Dave knew he was no ordinary tramp. That was very evident. "He might have money—who knows?" said Dave to himself as he returned from taking Steve home. He had been inclined to order the old man to leave; but he had very little sympathy with Steve. It was not the first time he had caused trouble in Dave's bar-room. "Served him right," muttered Dave. "He had no business bullying the old man. That old fellow has seen better days. He looks respectable."

The result of Dave's meditations was, that when the stranger asked for supper and a room, and paid all in advance, Dave extended him graceful hospitality.

Before Arthur returned to Kate he spoke to the stranger and thanked him "for taking a difficult case off his hands."

"I did nothing more for you, young man," said the stranger, "than you appeared willing to do for me. It is I who am really under an obligation to you."

"But you did the work more efficiently and more rapidly, I think," said Arthur.

"I am not so sure, even of that," said the old man. "However, it is done, and I do not think it will need to be done again." Then they parted.

"You have been a long while away," said Kate, as Arthur came up to her again.

"Longer than I expected when I left you here; and a fruitless search I had, too, so far as the button is concerned," he replied.

“What have you been doing?” asked Kate, observing his disordered appearance.

Arthur told her all that had happened, and Kate listened, both surprised and pained. She was afraid that sometime her brother’s impulsive spirit might draw him into serious trouble.

While they sat conversing, the school teacher, Dr. Sam, came down the road on his wheel. He had not stopped at the tavern to inquire about the affair reported by the boys; for the tavern was one spot in this good world that Dr. Sam felt like cursing when he passed it. He was agreeably surprised when he saw Kate and Arthur resting under the tree.

For some time a report had been current that an attachment existed between the teacher and the widow’s daughter. Perhaps Dr. Sam’s intimacy with Arthur gave color to the report. It was known that he stood high in the estimation of Mrs. Medford. In addition to this was the fact that Mrs. Medford had given Kate the advantage of attendance at a ladies’ college for the two years previous. The teacher’s aspiration to become a real medical doctor as soon as he could possibly arrange his plans was also well known. When the lady who formerly taught Kate music had jokingly remarked to her one day, “Kate, dear, when you graduate you will be a model doctor’s lady,” Kate was so embarrassed that almost her only reply was a suffusion of blushes. Then Miss Trillman’s suspicion was strengthened to a conviction. She was sure she had discovered a secret, and forthwith proclaimed, in confidence, of

course, that the widow's daughter and Dr. Sam were lovers.

"Why are you resting so near home?" asked Dr. Sam, coming over to the shade.

Kate replied, explaining Arthur's loss as the reason for their delay. Then she said, "I suppose you will be pleased when vacation begins; it is so hot."

"I will, indeed," replied Dr. Sam. "It is uphill work with the children in such weather. Then I need to be at my hay, and harvest will soon be on. You know I am interested in farming as well as teaching." Then, turning to Arthur, he said, "You were searching for a button, you say. Did you find it?"

"No," replied Arthur; "I found instead a new acquaintance, that I believe I shall follow up; and I found another, who may perhaps follow up me. Kate thinks so, at any rate." Then he told Dr. Sam of the affair at the tavern.

"So there was something in what Ben and Joker told me," said Dr. Sam. "Joker is such an original lad that I hardly knew how to receive his story. So Fitzhugh is back here again. I know him. Do you not remember meeting him at Shorey's barn-raising? He challenged anyone to 'pull necks,' and an old man, one of the carpenters, agreed to try. He fixed a short rope with a loop at each end large enough to go over the head, so that the two were about two feet apart. When the pulling began, he spat out a mouthful of tobacco juice on the old man's face. Of course, it was done to cause a fight; but the old man slipped the rope and went away. Do you not remember?"

"Yes, I recall the affair," said Arthur; "and as I recall it I am better satisfied with myself for resisting him to-day, for it was just a repetition of what we saw over there."

"Let us go home," said Kate, rising; "mother will be looking for us."

At the next corner they parted, going east and west on the concession; and this group of persons, who had come together under somewhat peculiar relations, were separated again. To learn more of them we must follow them individually.

V.

DOCTOR SAM.

SAMUEL MARTIN lived with his widowed mother on a fifty acre farm. He was her only son at home. Mrs. Martin had an older son, who, early in life, had become dissatisfied with home environment and had gone to that very indefinite region called "The States;" and for years they had not heard from him.

Mrs. Martin and Sam had dwelt alone for years, but could scarcely be said to be happy. Of strong mentality herself, she had conferred a similar intellectual calibre on her youngest son; and she found a mother's delight in seeing her boy's precociousness in study. She supplemented the knowledge he acquired at school, from the contents of her own well-stored mind, and purchased for the boy literature suited to his age and taste.

Young Sam earned his strange prenomen in this way: When he was about twelve years of age, the teacher started a class in the study of Physiology. Sam's mother, at the boy's instigation, requested the teacher to allow her son to enter the class, and although Sam was too young, the request was finally granted. To most of the pupils the new subject was a dull affair, notwithstanding that a Psalmist had said

that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." But for this boy the study was a garden of delights. It became a passion, so that he read far in advance of the class, and soon the bright little fellow stood at the head. At a second-hand bookstore in the city, he found a work on medicine, which he read also; and now he was in advance of his teacher, as was shown one day in the class. One of the pupils asked a question, not distinctly explained in the text-book, concerning the divisions of the brain—their relation to the nerve systems, and whether the involuntary muscles were governed by the sympathetic system or the cerebro-spinal system; and how these, in order, were directed, or received impulse from the respective sections of the brain. The teacher, who had either forgotten, or had never had the facts distinctly fixed in his mind, admitted that he could not give the answer.

"I can," called out young Sam. "I know that, teacher." "Well, let us have it, Sam," said the teacher, who was delighted with the progress Sam had made. The boy answered the question correctly, but added such a mass of information concerning the cerebrum and cerebellum, ganglion, and automatic motor ganglia, sensory and motor nerve, and plexus, that both class and teacher were amazed at his range of physiological knowledge.

"Where did you learn all that, Sam?" asked the teacher.

"Out of my doctor-book," was the reply.

"Well, Sam," replied the teacher smiling, "you

seem to know more about this subject already than some doctors I have met. I think if I put out a joint, I could trust you to replace it."

"I would not mind trying," said the boy.

"Supposing I broke my neck, Sam, would you try to fix that?"

"I don't think so, teacher," replied the boy, "it wouldn't be worth fixing."

At this reply the class laughed very loudly, and also the teacher. Sam joined in the laugh, too, looking innocently from one to the other, for he scarcely knew why they were laughing. He thought his answer was quite correct; but that evening his mother explained it to him.

From that notable day the scholars all called him "Doctor" Sam, and he was a little flattered with the title. Thus, with the advantage of a good early education, from which he pushed on to the possession of a first-class teacher's certificate, and with a good home library, Dr. Sam found plenty of material with which to develop his mental powers. When he was still a boy, the trustees added a fine library to the school outfit. Dr. Sam was surveying it with pleasure, one day, when the teacher asked, "What do you think of this, Sam?"

"I think it is '*ne plus ultra*,'" said the boy.

"That's right, Sam," said the teacher; "use your knowledge as you get it, and you will retain it."

But a dark shadow lay across Dr. Sam's home, and there appeared to be no hope of it ever being lifted. It was one of the saddest things that could enter into

the experience of a young man full of ambition. Shadows, whether they fall on vegetable life or on human life, invariably have a deteriorating effect; for life requires sunshine. Had it not been for Dr. Sam's association with so much young, pure life in the school, the effect on him would have been greater. His mother was a drunkard.

Mrs. Martin's farm had originally consisted of two hundred acres, for the father had intended that his two sons should live on farms beside each other. It did not please him that the eldest son had an aversion for agriculture, and early began to express a desire for the sea, an ambition which the parents had unconsciously stimulated by the books on seafaring life, with descriptions of naval heroes and battles, found in the home library.

Another source of irritation in the home had been the father's indulgence in drink. The means the family possessed came chiefly by the mother, whose family had been wealthy and had lived in aristocratic style. It was in her old home that the seeds of dissipation were cast into the soil of her young maidenhood, when she was accustomed to see liquors on her father's table, and parties were frequent in her home, at which the use of spirits was a common means of entertainment. Thus the reciprocal influence of husband and wife was in this particular thing only evil. Soon irritation between father and son ended in open quarrel, and the son left home. In anger at his departure, and partly from necessity, the father sold that half of the farm which would have been the

son's had he remained, and almost squandered the money. This dissipation hastened his own death, when Dr. Sam was yet a mere child. A few years later, the mother's lack of thrift and appetite for drink made it necessary to sell half the remaining hundred acres, and after freeing the remaining fifty acres from debt, secured herself a permanent home by deeding it to her youngest son. When still a boy he had to bear the mortification of leading his intoxicated mother home from "The Briton's Lodge," many a time, as he returned from school. Sometimes he would find her on the road, or some neighbor would bring her home helplessly intoxicated. Many a night the little fellow had gone out with a lantern to look for her; and if he did not find her on the road, he invariably made his way toward that open door of iniquity, "The Briton's Lodge."

Is it to be wondered at that he felt like cursing the spot that helped so much in bringing ruin to his mother? Or that he shunned it as he would have shunned a pest-house or a lazaretto?

As he grew to manhood he exercised more control over his mother, but she still obtained liquor by some agency he could not discover. He carried his examination so brilliantly, and maintained a character so blameless, that he rose in the estimation of the entire community. The trustees of the school at home offered him the position of teacher at an advanced salary, which he accepted with some misgivings; but his work had been eminently successful. The boys thought he was "easy" with the girls, but

they were compensated by the part he took in their play in such sports as football, baseball, duck-on-the-rock, and another game called "shinny," which they played with hooked sticks, like canes reversed. His early passion for the study of medicine continued, and he read much along lines that would some day be of professional value.

A question that hung heavy upon his mind was what to do with his mother. He had hoped and prayed that she might be rescued from drink, and while recently she had been less frequently intoxicated, he knew there was no abatement of the appetite. Could he take her with him when he should go to the medical college? Might not the environments of a great city only increase her facilities for obtaining liquor? Yet, to leave her behind appeared like leaving her to a fate no less certain. His final decision was that he would take his mother with him when he entered college. He was looking forward to teaching and farming for another year, during which he would prepare the necessary Latin. Dr. Sam's thoughts were now generally occupied with these matters when he was alone. On a few occasions, when his mother had been intoxicated and had given him greater provocation than usual, he had been sorely tempted to drop everything and go away—somewhere, anywhere—only to escape from those conditions of his home life that at times almost frenzied his brain. But the home of one's childhood, even though its moral and social disadvantages become apparent in mature years, has, nevertheless, attachments drawn

from the innocent associations of infancy and childhood, before we grew discontented from reflection, comparison, and the awakening of ambition, which a young person may be excused from regarding with a reverence that invests it with a character of sanctity. Dr. Sam put the thought away from him. Once when he asked the proprietor of "The Briton's Lodge" not to sell his mother liquor, the landlord laughed at him, and told him that his business "enjoyed the sanction of the law as much as school-teaching." When Dr. Sam began to plead for "the life and character of a woman," the brutal gentlemen of the bar told him :

"For that matter, your mother has no character to lose now and her money is just as good as any other person's. I sell to all who purchase. It is their business how they use what they buy from me."

Dr. Sam had to walk out of the bar-room at once to keep himself from committing some act of violence on this heartless monster, whose business was indirectly blighting his own youth by destroying his mother.

A poem in which Dr. Sam found especial delight was the Poet Laureate's "Ode to Wellington." He drank inspiration from those passages especially in which the poet extols the Anglo-Saxon sense of duty. One of these he had written in his best penmanship, and had placed it over his study table :

"Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,

Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun."

That "path of duty" appeared to Dr. Sam to be the guardianship of his mother.

"She has no other fault," he once said to Arthur; "and when I think of her early surroundings, it is scarcely her fault. I owe her much. She has always been kind and good to me. She may overcome this yet. Appetite may fail as old age comes on. At any rate I shall not leave her."

With such meditations, he made his way home on the afternoon referred to above, and going into the neat frame house, his found his mother—intoxicated.

VI.

AN AGED WATCHMAN.

WHEN Kate and Arthur reached their home they found Rev. Hiram Stafford and his daughter Marion with their mother.

Mrs. Medford had always adhered to the Episcopal Church ; but the membership of the congregation she had been identified with had been so reduced in numbers that the territory was wisely given up to the two larger bodies occupying it. From that time she and her family had been associated with the church of which Mr. Stafford was pastor. A close intimacy sprang up between Kate and Marion, and when Kate was at home visits between them were frequent. This was the first Marion had made since Kate's return from college.

Rev. Hiram Stafford was a minister of the old Wesleyan school, who had received his education in Ireland, taking his degree from the Dublin University. He was a type of a generation of preachers, most of whom have passed away, and the church is the poorer. Strong, independent, intellectual, spiritual, and fearless, they laid deep and strong foundations. The churches still retain the fibre of their Christian virility.

The old minister's hair was as white as fine linen, and his white beard, which he allowed to grow untrimmed, fell far down his breast, giving him the appearance of an ancient seer. He was rather below medium height. The labor of ten years of pioneer temperance work, together with thirty years of ministerial service had told on his frame, so strong and vigorous in youth. He was now sixty-five years of age, and in the peaceful consciousness of a life spent in holy purposes; he very much resembled "the shock of corn that cometh in its season." This was his third year at Bellheath, and he had determined to retire from the pastorate at the end of the year. In one respect his work in Bellheath had been unsatisfactory, and perplexing—he had not seen much fruit from the labor of two years. The experience was unusual, but he was waiting in hope and love. This afternoon he had called on Mrs. Medford, among others, as Marion desired to meet Kate.

Marion had seated herself at the old piano in the parlor, leaving her father with Mrs. Medford in the drawing-room across the hall. While she softly played over some old tunes, they drifted into a conversation about Mrs. Medford's husband's relatives in Ireland. Never having been there herself, Mrs. Medford could only speak from what her husband had told her of his family. She understood that his mother had been twice married, her first husband's name being Clarke, by whom she had a son and daughter. Mr. Stafford had known this older son slightly at the university, as he was in a lower year

when the former had graduated. This son had married, but his wife dying on the birth of a daughter, the child had been taken in charge by the mother's people and he had entered the army as a surgeon. When Mr. Stafford became acquainted with Mrs. Medford at Bellheath, he was delighted to learn of the identity of her husband's family. This former acquaintance with a relative gave him additional interest in the family who now dwelt at "The Old Orchard," as Mrs. Medford's home was denominated.

"Do you keep up any correspondence with your husband's people?" asked Mr. Stafford.

"Not since Arthur died," replied Mrs. Medford. "His friends not being personally acquainted with me have not had the same interest in a correspondence that previous friendship and acquaintance would have given them. Then his brother's departure was another reason, I suppose, for the dropping of correspondence between us.

"And what of Dr. Clarke? Do you know whether his friends have ever received word from him?" asked Mr. Stafford.

"Possibly some of them may have heard of him before this," replied Mrs. Medford, "but we have not. From the last account we received they were afraid he had perished in the Sepoy Mutiny, for he was with one of the regiments at Delhi."

"His daughter will be a young woman now, I suppose," said Mr. Stafford.

"She is a few years older than Arthur," replied Mrs. Medford; "but not hearing from them, we know

nothing of her either, only that she went to reside with her grandmother. They think, perhaps, that we are lost in 'the wilds of Canada,' as some of them call this country."

"Arthur's health has been better lately, has it not?" inquired Mr. Stafford.

"Very much better," replied Mrs. Medford. "I think he will soon resume study."

"What profession does he speak of entering upon?" again asked the old minister.

"He talks sometimes of civil engineering," replied Mrs. Medford. "Once I heard him speak of the army, and at times he talks of some mercantile pursuit. He appears to find difficulty in making a selection. If his health does not wholly improve he may remain on the farm. If that should be his choice I shall not prevent him, although I would rather have seen him enter upon another work."

She bent her head a little lower as she spoke, and the least appearance of moisture came to her eyes. The motion did not escape Mr. Stafford. He had a suspicion of what was in her mind.

"Might an old minister ask what the other work is?" he inquired.

Mrs. Medford replied, "I have never mentioned it to anyone before, but I may to you, since you are in the same work. I had hoped he might preach; but the work is so important and sacred, I dare not approach him on the matter. I am waiting to see what may become of his health, and whether he may get quite strong again or not."

"If you have not mentioned it to him yet," said Mr. Stafford, "do not. If the Master wants him, someone else will mention it to Arthur, or he will mention it to you. His indecision in regard to the choice of a profession, and even his temporary ill-health, may only be a preliminary restraint providentially ordered that he may the more fully decide for the ministry later. At any rate it is better that he should not know of your mind in regard to such a matter, for should he ultimately decide to preach, he will not have any doubts on his mind that the step was taken as a concession to a mother's love."

Then Mr. Stafford inquired about Kate's return and whether she had any choice of profession. It was a habit of thought with him that every life should have some definite purpose.

Mrs. Medford replied that probably Kate would graduate in music, and take up the work of instruction. Further than that she could not definitely say; but for the present she would not return to college.

Between the softly touched notes, Marion heard, quite unintentionally, however, the desire Mrs. Medford had expressed concerning Arthur; but she locked it in her heart. It was among the things too sacred to be made commonly known; nor did the knowledge that came to her that day ever influence her at any later period in her life.

The arrival of Kate and Arthur had interrupted the conversation at this point. Mrs. Medford, observing her son's appearance, asked :

"What have you been doing Arthur?"

It was a rule with him to take his mother into full confidence, and she now expected it on all occasions. So he briefly told her of all that had happened on the way home. He saw that she was pained, but she only replied :

“ I am sorry you did not come on home.”

“ I am nothing the worse, mother,” said Arthur ; “ and by stopping I formed an interesting acquaintance without finding out his name—the old man I mean. He is no ordinary fellow. Not a single bad word escaped him during the quarrel, when Fitzhugh was swearing bad enough to make you smell brimstone. He spoke elegant English, too, when I bade him good-bye.”

This account of the stranger interested them all. Marion had heard the young people arrive, and coming out of the parlor she extended a very warm greeting to Kate. Arthur, though somewhat embarrassed by his unkempt appearance, came forward to greet her.

“ I wish you had brought that old Trojan along with you,” said Marion. “ I am quite interested in him from what I have heard from you. I think we met him to-day. And you did not even find out his name ? Why, if one of us girls had been rescued by a gentleman we would have insisted on learning his name, wouldn’t we Kate ? ” glancing at her friend.

Arthur scarcely knew how to receive her words, for Marion Stafford had always been something of an enigma to him. He was not sure that she was not having a little amusement out of his mishap. He

hardly enjoyed the sound of those terms, "Trojan" and "rescued," and he was tempted to say that he was not aware that he had been "rescued." Mrs. Medford spoke again with characteristic sympathy:

"Is there not some danger of those men returning again and doing the old man some injury? I am surprised to hear of Mr. Blackrock being mixed up in such an affair."

"Well, mother, I am also mixed up in the affair," said Arthur. "I am certain Fitzhugh will not go back. He will need a doctor's care for a few weeks, and I do not know of anyone else who will care to try a hand with the old man when they hear how quickly he defeated the other. Who is there that would even dare to have faced Fitzhugh as the old man did?"

"We have been given to understand that Mr. Arthur Medford was quite willing to face him, and even did so," said Marion, with a twinkle in her beautiful black eyes.

Arthur blushed, and was compelled to laugh a little, for having unconsciously paid himself a compliment. He had exposed himself to Marion's sally, and fearing there might be another from the same source, he excused himself to prepare for tea. Young ladies in general were more mysterious to Arthur than algebraic symbols. He understood Kate; but other young ladies were so different from Kate. Why were not more of them like her—sympathetic, generous, loving, and not always looking for things in one that they might laugh at, and make a young man feel like

going away to some place where there would be no young ladies ?

“ I suppose there is room for another, even though you have company, Mrs. Medford ? ” called a voice at the open door.

Turning in the direction of the voice, Mrs. Medford saw Miss Trillman, the music teacher, who had given Kate and Arthur all the primary musical education they had received.

“ Come in, Miss Trillman,” said Mrs. Medford ; “ you know you are always welcome. We are just about to have tea, and you will come with us.”

“ Oh, dear heart ! Don’t I know I’m always welcome here,” said Miss Trillman. “ Who was ever made to feel unwelcome at ‘ The Old Orchard ’ ? It’s as beautiful a place as ever Boffin’s Bower was, and I’m sure Mrs. Boffin never was kinder than you. But, thank you, I shall not remain more than a minute. I only ran in to see Kate ; and here she is, prettier than ever. You dear girl ! ” She kissed Kate several times, hugged her to her heart, and patted her on the shoulder, with other singular demonstrations of affection. Then she resumed her complimentary strain :

“ How well you look ! Why, you are as beautiful as little Kate Nickleby. You know I always think she is one of the most attractive young ladies Dickens has shown us. Now, there you see, Katie, I am the same as I used to be, finding in Dickens a likeness to everything I see and everyone I meet ; and even myself, too, for it appears to me I must be like David Copperfield’s aunt ; ” and she laughed heartily.

Then she greeted Mr. Stafford, and also Marion, who was looking rather amused. At this moment Arthur returned to the room.

“Good evening, Arthur,” said Miss Trillman; “you look bright, as usual, and your hair is just lovely. Don’t think of having it cut shorter, Arthur. It spoils your appearance to have short hair. I see that the story those bad boys were telling me, about your being into a quarrel, was not true. I told them so.”

Here Marion cast an amused look upon Arthur, while Miss Trillman went on :

“How some people do delight in making up false reports about their neighbors! Do you know I heard one to-day about myself; but you will hear it, too, if you have not already. I was just saying, Arthur, that Katie always reminds me of Kate Nickleby in Dickens, you know. You have read Dickens? And you, Arthur, you have grown so, you remind me of Nicholas Nickleby himself, when Miss Squeers was trying to make love to him; you do, really.” Then she laughed again, and the young ladies also laughed, especially Marion.

“You will stay for tea,” suggested Arthur. “I will go and feed your horse.”

“Oh, no; I cannot,” she cried. “Don’t touch my horse! Don’t you remember that I never let gentlemen touch Charlie? I call him Charlie, after Dickens, you know. Why, Arthur, pardon me when I say I would not be dependent on a gentleman to care for my horse.”

Then she turned to the two young ladies again and

began : " Now, Katie, I want an afternoon from you, and also from you, Miss Marion. We will make the time pleasant for you at Barberry Cottage. I will come for you myself, and then in the evening I will bring you both home again. Mr. Stafford, you will see that Marion does not fail me," she said, turning to the old minister. He promised that Marion should go. " Now, I must go," said Miss Trillman ; " I give two more lessons at home this evening."

Arthur moved toward the door as though he would go out to assist her with her horse ; but she stopped him with one long arm, and a beautifully shaped and jewelled hand upraised.

" No, Arthur, thank you ; I do not need your help. Stay here. Have you forgotten so soon that no gentleman is allowed to touch my horse ? "

She was gone ; her departure seemed to leave a great blank in the room, for her presence was so striking and her personality so impressive. Marion's critical and observant eyes followed her. She noted her tall, almost masculine figure, her oddly arranged apparel, and that on her hat were bits of millinery for every season, an immense bundle of variegated oddities.

" Miss Trillman is really a remarkable person," said Mr. Stafford, when they sat down to tea.

" She is, indeed," replied Mrs. Medford ; " but when you know her she is always a friend, as true as gold. Knowing her good heart, I can overlook many of her odd ways."

Marion had never had so close a meeting with Miss Trillman before, and she was now filled with interest for the coming visit to Barberry Cottage.

In the cool of the evening Mr. Stafford and Marion drove home. As "Roan," their driver, stepped lightly over the hot, dry gravel, father and daughter engaged in a conversation on the events of the day.

"Have you met that spinster lady before, Marion?" asked Mr. Stafford.

"I have, pa," replied Marion; "but I never engaged in a conversation with her before. She is rather peculiar I would say. I wonder what false reports people are circulating about her. Have you heard any?"

"Oh, they have a report going," replied Mr. Stafford, "that old Mervin Robbs goes to see her occasionally, and some are hinting that they are going to marry. He looks to me like a man who would be more likely to go to his grave, or to the asylum for insane people, rather than to the marriage altar. You know him, Marion; he is Mrs. Daysmore's uncle."

Marion laughed merrily at the report, for it was the first time it had been told her. "Not much wonder Miss Trillman is annoyed," she observed.

Then Mr. Stafford continued: "You appeared rather amused, Marion, over Arthur's difficulty."

"Did I, pa?" asked Marion, and again her black eyes looked merry.

"I thought so," said her father. "I was afraid that he and his mother might suppose you were making game of him."

"Well, pa," said Marion, turning half around toward him, "Arthur's appearance was so unusual for him, that it did amuse me. One cuff gone and the

sleeve dangling loose. His long, yellow hair all tumbled ; his tie splashed, and some dust marks on his face. You know how carefully he is always dressed, and how genteel he always looks, and rather prides himself on being so, I imagine."

"Oh, then, Marion, I see," exclaimed Mr. Stafford ; "you have been taking close notice of Arthur, and you have observed that he is always well dressed, and genteel and ——."

Here Marion broke in with, "Oh, pa, now!" It was her turn to appear a little confused, although she knew her father's remark was only a little pleasantry. Marion, in her intimacy with the Medford family, had recognized that Arthur was (to speak very mildly, and with no desire to give a wrong impression) different from, and more interesting in many respects, than many young men whom, of necessity, she met as the daughter of an itinerant preacher.

Then, after a moment, Marion said, "If you begin to throw out hints at me in that way, pa, I'll have to stay at home when you go out to make calls."

"But," said Mr. Stafford, "he surely was not wrong in trying to protect an old man from rough treatment."

"The old man evidently was able to protect himself," said Marion, determined to argue.

"Certainly," replied her father, who was determined to uphold Arthur, "but Arthur did not know that till afterward."

"Well, then," said Marion, unwilling to yield the position she had taken, "he should have waited a

little while until he saw further that the old man was unable to defend himself."

Then the conversation drifted to other matters. Marion felt sure that Arthur was proud over having thrown Steve into the horse-trough, and she felt justified in teasing him about it. By the time "Roan" brought them to the parsonage gate, Arthur had been degraded to the status of a "conceited prig."

These drives with Marion always gave Mr. Stafford great enjoyment. She was the child of his old age, and she was yet in a sense his baby-girl. She resembled, much more than Lucinda her sister, the dear one who had parted from him when Marion was born. As she had grown to young womanhood her interest in his work increased. She would rewrite his sermons, correcting them here and there, or adding new illustrations. When he purchased new books, Marion would read them to him, and they would review these, talking them over in their afternoon drives.

These two young women, Kate and Marion, had much in common, and yet were widely different. Kate, with clear intuitions of right, and the will to follow them; generous, self-sacrificing, ready to serve. Marion, vivacious, high in ideality, ambitious to excel, aspiring to lead. It may be interesting to follow them as they enter those paths which neither of them could say she had marked out for herself.

VII.

THE OLD ORCHARD.

WHATEVER Arthur Medford might be in the estimation of Marion Stafford, in his own home he was loved. His mother had always been solicitous for her son, and this evening felt some anxiety over what had occurred. She believed his high sense of right would always restrain him from things low or degrading; but she had fears lest this very spirit, united with unconquerable energy, might sometime suddenly thrust him into rash conduct, similar to the affair with Steve Fitzhugh.

But Arthur had a large reserve of caution. It had not deserted him when he confronted Steve. He remembered where his strength lay, and exercised it upon his opponent. However, it was an injustice to him to suppose that he was exalted over his victory. He felt justified in having acted in defence of an old man; still he felt some inward recoil from having his name associated with that of Steve Fitzhugh.

Mrs. Medford knew more of Steve than was known to Arthur. She could remember when, as a boy, he had attended Sunday School, and she had been hopeful for a time that he would take a decided step toward a religious life. But his abnormal physical growth while yet a youth in years, and his early

association with evil companions, especially around "The Briton's Lodge," dissipated thoughts of a better life. Mrs. Medford resolved to visit Steve once more, and endeavor to win him to virtue, or at any rate convince him that Arthur was not his enemy.

The home of the Medfords was a unique dwelling, as it had been built without any original complete plan. Its appearance might have reminded the student of Hawthorne of "The House of the Seven Gables." The main portion of the house was a large oblong two and a half story frame, at each end of which rose a large quadruple chimney of red brick. This part had a narrow verandah along the front or north side, and the east end. On the west an addition had been built on the "lean-to" plan, which projected to the front of the verandah. Projecting from this westward were three small, porch-like rooms, designed for sleeping apartments. Back of the central part of the house was a large breakfast-room and kitchen, and adjoining this a woodshed. To the west of the woodshed was a dairy of considerable size. Southward, at some little distance, lay the barn and outbuildings. There was a large lawn in front of the house, and to the eastward about three acres had been planted in orchard by the original owner. Being one of the first orchards planted in the township, it was now getting old. Hence the name by which Mrs. Medford's place was known.

The old aristocrat who built this remarkable dwelling had desired to found a "house," and to live on the plan of the English gentry; but as feudal insti-

tutions have never flourished well on democratic soil, the hope of an ancestral house soon faded away. His money ran short, and his servants left him to build up homes of their own. His sons became dissatisfied with the prospect of poverty, however aristocratic it might be, and soon the ambitious old man was left alone.

After the estate came into the possession of Mrs. Medford's husband, some changes had been made in the house; but even as occupied by the Medford family, the domicile of "The Old Orchard" was a very unshapely building. After the death of her husband Mrs. Medford had leased to Mr. Blackrock the back hundred acres of her estate, which was on the same concession as his own farm; and the front of the farm, on which the house was situated, was worked "on shares" by neighbors. Communication between the two parts of her estate was made convenient by a lane which extended from end to end across it.

In this manner the family had lived comfortably while Kate and Arthur were children at school. The family library was a good one; indeed, it had been considered a prodigy in former days. Old Frank Thomson, the book peddler, never failed to call at Mrs. Medford's, for here he made his best sales, besides always finding a welcome. The children grew up in touch with the intellectual life of the time. Arthur, unfortunately, had read beyond his strength, and had been advised to remain out of school for a year. He tried to spend this enforced

vacation to the best advantage to himself. Sometimes he would ride to the Thames and spend the day fishing or strolling amid the beautiful beech and maple groves of its high, sloping banks. Often he had gone to Dr. Sam's school at the noon hour and joined the boys in their sports, so that he became a good second to the teacher in popularity.

One day, on the school grounds, Arthur met an English lad, who was distinguished for his great power of voice. He asked the lad's name, and the boy answered him, "I'm Jokah Bawn, a Banado boy, from the ole country, from Hengland." He was whistling and singing gaily, and Arthur thought he discerned the lad's great talent, music. The next time he visited the school he gave Joker a present of a new mouth-organ, and the boy's cup of joy was full. He asked Arthur if there was anything he could do for him. "Be a good boy, and study your lessons well, for my sake," said Arthur. From that day Joker studied hard to please his new friend. He also practised much with the mouth-organ. The latent genius within that pinched and half-starved body awoke at the sound of the sweet-toned instrument. In a week he played sweetly every tune he knew. Those peculiar and beautiful combinations of tones of which such an instrument is capable appeared to come to him as an intuition. His very soul went into the music, and his little body tingled to the tips of his fingers in an ecstasy of delight. From that time Joker was much in demand in all the school entertainments the teacher permitted the pupils to have.

Arthur frequently spent an hour in the parsonage with Mr. Stafford, who was always delighted to come in contact with a bright, recipient mind ; nor did Arthur ever leave that well-ordered study without a new inspiration and a stronger desire to be a man among men ; for Mr. Stafford possessed a wonderful power to enthuse young spirits with the desire to excel. At times, when he visited the parsonage, he was thrown more into the company of Marion. On such occasions he had opportunities to see that the young woman's physical beauty was but the index of an even richer beauty of intellect and spirit, which shone through the thin veil of nature. Still Arthur would not admit that his interest in Marion was anything more than friendship, strengthened by intimate family relations. He stoutly denied to Kate any more tender emotion that same evening as they sat on the front verandah, when she began to rally him about his visits to the parsonage, and the excellence of Marion's beauty.

Kate had said, "Arthur, I thought I never saw Marion look so beautiful as she was to-day, in that rich cream cashmere. She is growing so tall and stately that I am nothing beside her. I am almost jealous of her appearance."

"Oh, I think you bear a favorable comparison with her," replied Arthur.

"I suppose you still go sometimes to the parsonage, Arthur ?" said Kate.

"Yes ; quite often, indeed, I may say, Kate," he replied. "And I see now what you are coming at, my amiable little sister."

Kate was smiling as she said, "What a splendid couple you and Marion will be, Arthur." Then laying a plump hand on his knee, she said, "Really, I saw her blush when she came out and shook hands with you to-day." Then Kate threw herself back in the rocking-chair, and indulged in a merry, teasing laugh.

"Why, of course," said Arthur, "anyone who appreciates physical beauty would not deny that Marion is beautiful."

"Of course not," said Kate.

"I go to Mr. Stafford's, Kate," continued Arthur, "because, while out of school, and not having any special means of amusement, I find it a profitable way of spending an hour or two. They are people I like to be with."

"I quite believe you, Arthur," said the teasing Kate.

Seeing that he was not likely to prevail while Kate was in such a mood, Arthur now turned the line of thought over to his sister.

"Do you know, Kate," he said, "that people are hinting at the existence of the very same relations between you and Dr. Sam as you suggest may possibly exist between Marion Stafford and myself."

With every appearance of genuine naïveté, Kate again diverted Arthur's thoughts into another line, as she carelessly remarked :

"Oh, well, Arthur, you are too well acquainted with both parties, and know too much about the private affairs of each, to give any attention to those reports. You would feel more like classing them along with those reports Miss Trillman said were in circulation

concerning herself. I wonder what she had reference to?"

"Then you have not heard?" said Arthur, interrogatively, apparently never noticing how Kate had diverted his thoughts. Then he told her in substance what Marion had also been told by her father.

"What an absurd story!" said Kate, laughing heartily. "I do not very much wonder at Miss Trillman feeling annoyed."

"I suppose, Kate, you have some reason to feel some sympathy for her," said Arthur, glancing at her. "It is not agreeable to be made the subject of gossip, is it?"

"Oh, such a story is too silly for anyone to believe it," replied Kate. "There is too great difference between Miss Trillman and Mr. Robbs."

"But what about a case, Kate, where such a gulf does not separate the two parties?" asked Arthur.

In spite of herself, Kate was smiling at the manner in which Arthur found his way back to the theme on which she would rather not converse. But as she had begun the attack on him, she could not blame him for pursuing, as she tried to escape. It was, therefore, some relief when her mother appeared at the door and asked:

"Am I intruding on private matters, if I join you here?"

"You never intrude, mother," said Arthur, rising and giving his chair to her, and taking the one on the farther side from Kate. Then he continued: "I would give a good deal, mother, if I could just intro-

duce myself as you can ; you introduce yourself just as a pansy does in the spring."

"Thank you, Arthur," said Mrs. Medford ; "that is a beautiful compliment. I heard some laughing going on out here, and I was wondering what you children were so much amused about."

"What do you think, mother," said Arthur ; "Kate thinks I am going to Mr. Stafford's too frequently."

"No ; not too frequently, Arthur," interrupted Kate ; "just often enough to be interesting."

"I am sure I do not know any better place where you could go, Arthur," said his mother. "Mr. Stafford is a good companion."

"I was only speaking to Arthur, in a complimentary way, about Marion's beauty," said Kate.

"Kate has scarcely returned to her old self yet, since separating from her girl associations in the college, and you will have to grant her certain liberties, Arthur," said Mrs. Medford.

The stars were beginning to peep out by this time, as the twilight faded from the west. Kate now suggested a new line of thought to Arthur :

"You are something of an astronomer, Arthur," she said ; "point me out the Pole Star, please."

"Do you not know how to find it, Kate ?" asked Arthur ; and on her replying in the negative, he went on :

"Well, there are two ways by which you may be able to find it. First, look at *Ursa Major*."

"You will please translate those words for me," said Kate ; "then I may know where to look."

"Very well," replied Arthur, smiling; "I mean the Great Bear constellation, generally called the Dipper."

"I understand," replied Kate, "and I see the constellation."

"You see the pair of stars farthest from the handle? Those are called the Pointers, because a line drawn through them points toward the Pole Star. Now, then, Kate, you can find it," said Arthur, with considerable animation.

Kate found *Polaris*; and then Arthur said, "Now for the second way to find it. You see *Ursa Minor*, do you?"

"I suppose that means 'Little Bear,' or 'Little Dipper,'" said Kate.

"Well, now, *Polaris* is the end of its handle," said Arthur. "Those two are the principal constellations to be seen in our latitude in this month and in July."

"What of *Orion* and *Pleiades*, of which some mention is made in the Bible—are they visible?" asked Kate.

"Not in our latitude, Kate," replied Arthur. "They appear in the Equatorial Girdle, and cannot be seen above latitude 30°. I hope I may see them some day."

Kate had got Arthur now far away from earth, and she kept him there for some time longer; for Arthur was a lover of astronomical wonders. They entered on a discussion of astronomical terminology, which Kate found very interesting.

After a time Mrs. Medford spoke again. It was only a little sentence that she quoted, but it lifted up

her children's thoughts to something above the stars:

“‘ He made the stars also.’ ”

They sat chatting a little longer, while the night, like the shadow of some greater glory, fell about them, making manifest that handiwork hidden by the light of day, and revealing the glory that moves the heart to holiest communion, and fills the soul with profoundest awe.

VIII.

A BARNARDO BOY.

THAT same evening, after school, Joker made his way to the place he called home along with the other scholars going in his direction. He walked slowly, stepping to the time of the various tunes he executed upon his mouth-organ. Several of the boys who had "an ear for music," were also keeping time as they stepped along the dusty road, showing well-browned legs, bare from the knees, that merged into chubby feet of the same healthy color.

Joker led the company, playing his sweetest strains. At the gate of Jerry Blackrock he stopped, for he resided with this family, and forthwith he proceeded to shake hands with each one of the company, smiling good-naturedly as he did so. When the girls saw this unusual proceeding they began laughing. Soon their merriment passed into a scream of amused surprise as Joker now made his way toward them, calling out :

"Good-night, girls; let us shake hands."

The girls scurried off to the opposite side of the road, and ran away homeward with loud, merry laughter, interspersed with juvenile reproaches against "that silly goose, Joker."

One of them, named Minerva Daysmore, stood her ground, however, and confronted Joker with an air of authority, like a young Amazon.

"What do you mean talking about 'Good-night?' Don't you see where the sun is?" she asked, with much energy.

Joker was quite satisfied to look upon terrestrial bodies just at that time. Minerva had never appeared so beautiful to him as she did this evening, with her clear pink complexion and blue eyes, that looked down upon him from beneath a pink sunbonnet, which covered a mass of yellow curls. So that, without turning his eyes in the direction of the sun, he said, "Shake hands, Minnie," and extended his hand.

"Don't you dare to call me 'Minnie,'" said the girl, her blue eyes flashing with indignation, as she took a forward step. "You don't be just so free, or I'll shake you."

Minerva was Joker's senior, and well developed for her age. There were few of the schoolboys who had not reason to respect her word of authority.

"Beg pardon," said Joker; "I meant no offence, Minnie—."

"There you are again with your 'Minnie,'" said the enraged girl; "and I told you I would shake you if you made so free."

"I did not call you 'my Minnie,'" said Joker.

"You had better not do so," replied Minerva.

As Joker regarded the girl, her beauty appeared to increase with her anger, and he could hardly restrain himself from telling her that he wished she were his Minnie. But, he went on:

"I feel so good to-night, or this evening, I wanted to shake hands with everybody before I go in the house. I told you all in the school what Ben and I saw at the corner, and it did me so much good, Minnie, that I can —." But before he could finish the sentence Minerva caught him by the shoulder and was shaking him as easily as if her hand had grasped a doll.

Joker had no intention either of crying or of getting angry, and when Minerva saw that she was making no serious impression, she pushed him over to the gate and, opening it, sent him forward with as much impetus as her strength could generate, saying as she did so, "You learn to keep a civil tongue when talking to ladies."

Joker felt highly privileged in what Minerva had done. He came back to the gate to pick up his hat, that had blown off. His pleased look and laughing black eyes completely overcame Minerva's superficial indignation, and she had to turn away from the gate quickly to prevent Joker seeing a smile on her face.

Some of the boys who had been looking on had old scores to settle with Minerva for like treatment received at her hands. They now began an attack with shouts of derision:

"My Minnie," "Dear Minnie," "O, Joker's Minnie," "Don't call me Minnie." All the while they kept running in advance and managed to keep out of Minerva's reach. Failing to catch up to them, she threatened to report them to the teacher next day.

"Please, dear Minnie, don't do it. O, Minnie don't, please!" came from several boys.

Minerva now took to her last refuge and wept for a while. Before she had reached her own gate her indignation had subsided, and her thoughts returned to Joker. Then she began to laugh at the memory of him wanting to shake hands with them all.

"Really," she said to herself, "he is the most comical boy I ever knew." Then she recalled those black eyes that had looked at her through the fence. "I never saw prettier eyes. He is becoming a better player on that mouth-organ every day. How I would like to play an accompaniment with him in a few pieces!"

On the whole, the encounter had turned to Joker's advantage, for when, during the recitation of a lesson the next day at school, Minerva turned to steal a look at Joker, he was looking at her. She turned her face away quickly to hide a smile; but Joker saw the smile.

In some respects, Joker's home with the Blackrocks was very good; but in other respects it was not congenial to a nature that reached out after affection as his did. He was one of a contingent of Barnardo boys who had been sent out to Ontario, and he had been with these people about a year. They had not been unkind to him, but to them he was only a "Home boy," and Mrs. Blackrock especially had early decided to make him "keep his place."

This indefinite determination had at times brought Mrs. Blackrock into some perplexity or confusion. He

had been charged never to go into the parlor with his heavy boots on when there was "company" in. On one such occasion, when the parlor grate was in need of replenishing, Joker was ordered to bring in coal. Having procured the fuel, he drew off his boots and went into the parlor in his socks, with one great toe and two red heels showing out conspicuously to greet the company.

"Have you no boots, Joker?" asked one of the young men.

"Oh, yes," said the boy; "but missus told me never to come in here with them on when there was company in, so I took them off outside. I thought you would all have your boots off," and he looked around at the feet of the guests, who were enjoying a laugh at his unsophisticated reply.

During the first few years of their married life, no children had come to bless and brighten the home of Mr. and Mrs. Blackrock. They had brought an adopted baby girl with them when they first came to Canada, at which time they had settled not far from Kingston. But within three years after their arrival, a boy and girl had been born to them, and then the little girl whom they had adopted was transferred to a neighbor. Later they had moved westward and had taken up their present abode in Middlesex. Both their children were taken away in a diphtheria epidemic here. When his domestic source of happiness was thus in a large part removed, Jerry had become more spiritual and had joined the church with his wife. They had tried to supplement the loss they

had sustained by taking "Home" boys and girls, four of whom in succession had preceded Joker. None of them had been satisfactory to Mrs. Blackrock, and Joker's case was fast drifting toward the same issue. Mrs. Blackrock's attention had concentrated largely upon her beautiful house. Cast-iron rules were instituted and extreme fastidiousness was the standard. Necessarily, she had been greatly "tried" by the "Home" children.

When Joker came to Mr. Blackrock he had brought with him a young cocker spaniel, which was a gift from the old man with whom he had been previously, and of which he had been very fond. In the hope that it might make the boy more tractable, Mrs. Blackrock consented to let the dog go into Joker's room. So the spaniel became his companion by day and by night. Steve Fitzhugh had called on Jerry one day when home on a visit, and as they strolled in the orchard the puppy began to play about Steve's feet, at which he became angry, and catching the dog by the neck he threw it against a tree, breaking its back. Joker saw the affair from a distance, and ran to his dog. Steve laughed at him as he saw him fondle the dead pet. To laugh at his grief was more than even Joker's good nature would bear. A jagged stone went whizzing straight for Steve's head, but by a hasty "duck" he escaped the blow. Jerry also was annoyed at Steve's cruelty, and when the latter proposed to pay for the dog, he was about as indignant as the boy.

When this conduct of Steve's is placed in contrast

with Arthur's kindness to the lad, it will explain to some extent his extraordinary conduct on the tavern platform, and also how it was that he "felt so good" this particular evening.

Joker had seen Jerry rushing away without ever noticing that he was present, but he could not understand Jerry's strange conduct. As he went in from the gate he resolved not to refer to what he had been an eye-witness of, and also strove to conceal his joy at the same.

"You are late to-night, Joker," said Mrs. Blackrock; "it is five o'clock. What kept you?"

"We walked slow," replied the lad.

"Was there anything at the corner to attract your attention as you came past?" asked Jerry.

"I saw no one but an old man on the bench outside, but I did not know him," said Joker.

"Was there no one else around?" continued Jerry.

"No one except Jimmie," replied Joker.

This information gave Jerry some relief, for he hoped now that his name might not be associated with Steve's in a public scandal.

About their usual bedtime Mrs. Blackrock called Joker into the sitting-room. "Take a seat near the table with us; we are going to have worship," she said.

Joker sat down near the table, amazed. What new turn was this, and what had caused it?

Jerry opened the family Bible at Psalm thirty-nine. It was much the same to him where he might open it; for a man in his frame of mind was almost certain

to discover thoughts in any portion of the Word he might choose which would be rather disturbing. The first five verses of the psalm suited his feelings very well. It is "so comforting" to find words in the Book soothing to our feelings. Jerry had found them. But verses six to eleven had the opposite effect rather. Was he "disquieted in vain"? He had heaped up riches, but who would gather them? Who? But the Psalm closed with a petition so beautiful and appropriate that he would continue it on bended knee. Closing the Book, he looked at his wife, then at Joker, and said, "Let us pray."

If the prayer that followed were transcribed *verbatim* it might be misunderstood, in view of the fact that Jerry was an unlearned man and poorly acquainted with the meaning of the larger words he had heard used by others, some of which he now used; it might appear irreverent.

Joker observed how Jerry prayed for him, then for Mrs. Blackrock, then for the neighborhood; and as the circle was completed he came back to Joker and prayed fervently that the boy might be "forgiven the sin of his heart." Joker was on the point of rising to ask Jerry what he had done wrong, and what this sin of his heart might be; also, why he did not pray more for himself. But the next sentence, which is here transcribed, seemed more inclusive: "While we do not know the aboriginal thought of these words, may we all be saved from the sin of our hearts, and be so unspeakably happy as to be taken right up horizontally to heaven at last, and—" He was going

to return to Joker's condition again, but the boy could not contain himself any longer.

"You'll never get there, Jerry, if you go horizontally," called out Joker, at the same time raising his head and looking over the table. "Horizontally is ahead of you, and all around. Heaven is overhead of us, if I know it right," he continued; "so you are wrong there, Jerry."

Cold sweat broke out on Mrs. Blackrock's forehead at Joker's interruption, and she murmured something about "blasphemy."

Poor Jerry was brought to a standstill, and he was unable to offer another word of petition. He remembered, however, to say "Amen," and at this customary termination of prayer they all arose.

"Jerry, what awful bad thing have I done?" asked Joker. "You prayed for me nearly all the time." But without another word Jerry went away to his room.

"Joker," said Mrs. Blackrock, "you go right away to your bed. You will hear more about your conduct later. If ever you prayed for mercy, do it to-night, that this terrible sin may be forgiven you, you little wretch!"

The boy was amazed at her words, and was about to make some reply, when she stopped him with, "Go off to bed, I tell you," and opened the door of the stairway leading to his room.

He moved by her without a word, receiving as he passed a loud slap on the side of his head; then up the stairs and into his room. He wondered what he

had done, and what Mrs. Blackrock's anger all meant; why he had been slapped and ordered off to bed; but he did pray, kneeling in the pale light of the full moon, as it shone through his window. He scarcely knew how to pray, but a verse he had heard in the Sunday School came to his mind: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

As he rose up and got into bed a new joy and peace came to him, and he continued to think over those things mentioned in the verse. He had a Father, and he had an angel who saw that Father's face—perhaps more than one. Who were they? Was it not strange that if angels took such interest in little "Home boys," rich people were often unkind to them and slapped them for no offence. Then his thoughts turned again to heaven. Was his mother there too?—perhaps so. With such thoughts he dropped asleep, and in sleep he saw things more beautiful than his waking imagination had ever pictured. A beautiful shining form came to him, and bending low, put a sweet kiss on the spot where he had received the blow from Mrs. Blackrock. Instinctively the boy exclaimed, "Mother! O mother! You are my angel! Kiss me again, mother!" Then the bright figure kissed him again, and the little "Home boy" slept on, while unseen watchers guarded his bed.

From that night Joker was a different boy. He knew that something had been taken away from him,

and something had been given to him, although he could not explain it; but he knew he was very happy now.

The events of that evening had brought Mrs. Blackrock to a final decision. Joker must leave her house, and so she told her husband when she went to her room. Jerry, however, appeared to be asleep. Perhaps he was.

Book II.

GROWTH.

I.

THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER.

A WEEK had passed ; harvest had begun. The old stranger still remained at "The Briton's Lodge." Dave Stenson had been busily exercising his mind upon the new subject that had so unexpectedly come to his hand. Could he in any way use him for a purpose ?

Dave was making a payment to the brewer's agent for a consignment of supplies this evening as the old stranger sat at supper. Going to the door, Dave spoke to him : "I suppose, friend, you couldn't break a fifty ?" at the same time holding up a bank note.

"Oh, yes," replied the other ; "I can do that if tens are any good to you." Then he slipped a thumb and finger into his vest pocket, drew out what might have been a hundred dollars, and handed the required sum to Stenson.

"Much obliged," said the landlord. "I am glad to have a banker so convenient."

After the agent went away Stenson was alone, and he remained behind the bar, leaning forward and drumming a devil's tattoo with his fingers to some inaudible music that played among the chords of a pleased imagination.

"He has money all right," he said to himself. "He's material that can be worked up. I'll bag my game before long, or I'm not Dave Stenson; but I'll have to get him and Steve reconciled, and I must see if I can't get Steve into the play, too." Then, audibly, as he spread out his shiny fat hands with a slap on the beautiful polished cherry top of the bar, he said: "Yes; well now, I must have some supper," and went toward the dining-room. The old man was just leaving the table, and Stenson was disappointed, as he wanted to enter into conversation with him, and perhaps "feel" him a little on some matters in his mind. The old man went to his room. As he put the fifty dollar note in his leather bag, there was a little smile on his countenance. Then he proceeded to make certain changes in his apparel.

During the week a report had gone forth that the old man who had defeated Steve had been at one time a prize-fighter, and much interest had been taken in him whenever he appeared on the front bench in the evenings. This evening a number of men were assembled at the post-office store, which in most places amounts to a rural club, minus rules and definiteness of membership. Among them was old Neil McNair. He had been rather pleased to hear of Steve's humiliation, because his own son Jack had

been worsted in an altercation with the former, and the old Scotchman did not like it. When he heard of Arthur's part in the affair, he exclaimed :

" Wha'd a thocht it o' him ! Aye, he's a brae lad ta dicht big Steve in the trough."

Neil was filled with curiosity to see the stranger, and learning that he was in the tavern, he said, "I maun see the auld man and gie him a treat for his pluck." Then he went toward the tavern, smoking a short clay pipe that was black with age and use. Several young men strolled over after him.

From the age of twenty-three to thirty Neil had served in a Scotch regiment and had seen active service in India. Woe to the man who dared to say aught in his presence against the Queen or the Empire of Britain ! This early experience had given him something of a liking for the sound of conflict. It would have been a great act of self-denial for him to have gone home that evening without seeing the man who had defeated the mighty Steve Fitzhugh.

But Neil was not just prepared for the vision that came before him as he stepped on the platform, for at that moment the old stranger came out of the door and went over to the long bench. He was now dressed in a loose, dark-colored coat, under which a dull red, loose-fitting shirt was visible. His trousers were the same in color as his coat, and were supported by a broad leather belt about his waist, from which, on the left side, was suspended a pouch, resembling that in which a pistol is carried. On his head was the same broad-brimmed gray hat with low

crown. He stood six inches, at least, taller than anyone else on the platform.

The stranger had purposely donned this somewhat grotesque and peculiar garb. He was not yet prepared to go away from the tavern, but he had already become suspicious of his surroundings. He was suspicious of Stenson, and there might be some of Steve's friends among those who assembled at the tavern. This peculiar garb might have a restraining effect. It most certainly had with Neil McNair.

"He cuid hae takin' his supper aff the croon o' ony ane amang us," was what Neil said to his wife that evening in describing the strange figure of the old man.

If Neil had been anything but a Scotchman, he might have turned and run away, but he did not. He just stood in his position and "glowered" at what appeared to be the figure of some brigand suddenly appearing in a quiet rural spot, "whaur ye might leave yer doors wi' oot a bar an' sleep soon," as Neil had often said in expatiating on the virtues of his community. But he had no heart left to "mak' freens," with the stranger and treat him. It might be all true that he had given Steve "a dribbin'," and was a plucky old man, but that red shirt, pistol-case, and wide hat, the very things he had seen those fellows wearing who had come back "fra Kalaifornia?" Would he be seen at the bar drinking with a man like this, and he an elder in the church? Not he! So, having "glowered" to his entire satisfaction, he turned, and to the immense amusement of the young

men present, stumped away home, carrying with him his beloved *Toronto Leader*, in which he would find the latest speech of Disraeli, and he knew the latter would "tear to flitters" the opposition of Gladstone to the policy of the Imperial Government on the Eastern question. Neil complimented himself that in so doing he would find something more becoming to an elder "than claverin' wi' a red-shirted villain." That night he locked every door in the house and put sticks in the windows, observing to his wife as he performed the unusual task, that "it used ta be safe ta lie doon at nicht, wi' the doors and wundas unlocked, but efter seein' yon lad I'll da it na mair, fur the hoose is na safe."

The stranger was aware that the men felt embarrassed, although they appeared to desire a conversation. He began to speak with some of them on matters relating to the farm, and the prospects of harvest, and soon conversation became easier and more general. He interested the young men in descriptions of the conditions of life in South Africa and Australia, where he had seen ranching carried on.

Jack McNair, Neil's son, had joined the crowd gathered about the tavern platform, and while the stranger was engaged with the other young men, Dave Stenson drew Jack aside into the room back of the bar-room, where he engaged him in a conversation which finally turned upon the old stranger and the fight with Steve Fitzhugh. All he said to Jack was a defence of the stranger's conduct in the matter, with fine touches of description concerning his skill

as a boxer. He took care to leave no doubt on Jack's mind but that the old man was an ex-pugilist with plenty of means, who for pastime was roaming about incognito, occasionally varying the order of his life by having a fight "with some conceited hoosier."

"Jack," said Stenson, "if the old fellow could only be persuaded to give lessons in boxing for a month or so, he would have you able to get even with Steve on that old score of yours. Why, Steve knows nothing about the science. He made no showing with the old man. I never saw anything poorer. The old fellow just dropped him as he pleased. Why, Steve never got near him once! He couldn't. It wasn't in him, I tell you."

Jack was naturally pugnacious. The idea of getting even with Steve pleased him. He was willing, as Stenson suggested, to propose to the stranger that he give them some lessons. Stenson suggested that they might have the hall over the shed for a small consideration, and they could charge for tickets of admission to pay expenses and remunerate the instructor. It was rather a dull time for "business" with Stenson, and he was beginning to feel the falling off. If he could only start up some new attraction that would draw in the young men, perhaps "business" might improve.

Jack strolled out to the front again, and soon entered into conversation with the others who were talking with the stranger.

"You have seen a good deal of life," said he, when a convenient opening came.

"Oh, I have been around the world a bit," replied the stranger. "I have, as you say, seen a good deal of men."

"And some rough fellows, too, I suppose," said Jack.

"Yes," said the stranger, "I have met rough men."

"And handled some of them, too, I guess," continued Jack. "You saw one of them here last week."

"There was a young fellow here one day who appeared inclined to quarrel," replied the other.

"Some of us were thinking," went on Jack, "that you might be willing to give a few lessons in the use of the gloves. I think we could find a room, and by selling tickets we could meet expenses and pay you something for your trouble."

"Oh, I might," said the stranger, "if I could be sure you would make a right use of what I would teach you and not abuse it, to your own injury and the injury of others. As for pay, I would not take anything for it. If you can find a room and meet the expenses, I would give lessons for a month, and in that time I could teach you all I know about boxing."

This was better than Jack had looked for, and he went in search of Stenson, who by this time was away about the stables. Dave agreed to let them have the hall, and they might give him what they thought right. Several young men agreed at once to take part, and the final arrangement was that the fees should all go to Stenson. This was a better turn in matters than even the landlord had expected, and he expressed his satisfaction by calling in all who would

come to be treated. To the surprise of most of the young men the stranger did not go in.

While they were thus engaged a carriage drove up, and a young man sprang out; then a couple of trunks were thrown down on the platform as Jimmie came forward to take charge of the horses. Some of the young men came out to see who had arrived.

"Hello, Hed!" cried one; "Hello, Heddie V.!" cried another, coming forward and grasping him by the hand familiarly.

The new comer was Hedley Vicars Stenson, son of the landlord, just arrived from the business college, where he had spent the past half year. The father, hearing his son's name called, came to the door, and shook him warmly by the hand. "You've surprised us," said he. "We did not look for you for another week."

Hedley was surprised to see so many about the tavern, and came to the conclusion that "business was improving with the governor." When he passed in he was met by his mother, who embraced him lovingly, for in all the world there was no one so dear to her as "Heddie." He had grown a dark moustache during the six months' absence, which added to his manly appearance a great deal; but the pale complexion, the washed-out expression, and the eyes that were beginning to speak, revealed the hidden life. Even this evening he walked rather uncertainly, and though he had smoked cigars constantly to destroy the fumes of drink, the kiss he gave his mother was far from pure. It was not encouraging to her, and her spirit went

down considerably when she saw his condition. But Dave Stenson was in such good spirits over the prospect of a new turn in business that he paid little attention to Hedley's condition; or, if he gave it a thought, it was to excuse him for "taking too much," at the prospect of returning to his old home for vacation.

The parents had started Hedley in life with the name of a good man upon him, for like many ambitious parents who catch at ready-made greatness for their children, they had a strong conviction that "there is something in a name."

Mrs. Stenson was a member of the church, and generally attended very well, except on those occasions for which it had been announced that the pastor would preach on temperance. At such times Mrs. Stenson almost invariably "had a severe headache," or otherwise "was not feeling well." The coincidence of these "temperance Sundays" with the times when "company unexpectedly came" to Mrs. Stenson's was remarkable, too. More than once she had made apology to the minister in charge, declaring she was "so sorry, too; for although we are in the business I like to hear the question fairly gone into, and you always treat it fairly. So does Dave. He respects ministers who are not afraid to speak out their mind on these things." She did not tell, however, that during the week previous, two or three pressing invitations had gone out to friends at a distance, urging them, almost immoderately, for a visit on that particular Sunday.

Mrs. Stenson had persuaded Hedley to join the church with her at the close of a series of special revival meetings, three years before, notwithstanding that he had protested that he was not a proper person for church membership. "As long as we are in this business," Hedley had said, "it is going to be impossible for me to be a Christian, for I am not able to resist the temptations of the place."

Hedley Stenson might have been a good and noble young man in another situation in life. He really desired to be good, and strove against temptation with all the native force of resolution at his command; but alcoholic ancestral blood flowed in his veins from three generations of liquor dealers. The chief visitors at his home were his father's congeners in the traffic. He grew up as a boy with the odor of liquor in every room of the house, while the clink of glasses and the sharp reports of exploding corks were in his ears every day. What human power could resist such forces and keep pure? For years his mother had talked with the church people of the way she was "urging Dave to give up the business;" but still they were in it. It seemed strange, however, that the "stand" was never advertised for sale, not so much as by a shingle, with the words "FOR SALE" on it. Once, recently, she had heard some talk of the probability of a new prohibitory law being submitted, by which the county might abolish licensed places, and she had asked Mrs. Medford, with considerable concern, whether she supposed there was any likelihood of it being carried, for if there was they would sell out.

"Why, Mrs. Stenson," replied Mrs. Medford, "I thought you had been wanting to sell for years, and could not!"

"Yes; but we would try harder, if we thought the license would be taken away from us," said the lady of "The Briton's Lodge," and she wondered why Mrs. Medford smiled as she undertook to unravel a hard knot in the skein she was winding into a ball.

All considerations in view, it was no great matter of surprise that her son's kiss was not pure. Other young men had gone from her door who had kissed mothers or sisters, but whose kisses were not pure. She had received from her own son the same in kind as she had assisted in bringing to others. She went to her room that night to fall upon her knees, weeping bitterly while she cried: "O God, save my son, my darling Hedley! He is my only child, given by Thee. He is thy child. Oh, save, save that which I have committed unto Thee! Save him, O Father, in heaven! Save him from a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's doom!"

Hedley was delighted with the proposed boxing lessons. He knew a place in the city where all requisites could be procured. The class might soon begin, therefore.

When Dave Stenson retired, he found his wife still on her knees quietly weeping, and suspecting the cause, he withdrew to another room. Hours passed and she yet remained on her knees.

The house was still, excepting for some incoherent sounds that came occasionally from the room behind

the bar-room, where her son and the young men who had remained kept up the midnight revel.

When in the gray dawn of another day two or three who had kept sober enough to be able still to walk carried Hedley upstairs and laid him upon a bed dressed as he was when he arrived home, his mother was still on her knees.

When the young men were gone away she went softly into the room where he lay in his drunken stupor. She removed as much of his clothing as she conveniently could, covered him lightly and kissed him again. Then she retired ;—but not to sleep.

II.

A . CANNY SCOT.

WITHIN a week the requisites for the “glove lessons” had been procured, and about fifty young men had taken tickets. They met twice a week, and generally the instructor kept them engaged in the hall till after ten o’clock, when the bar-room closed, much to the annoyance of Stenson, who began to fear that the boxing scheme was not going to help his business. This thought came to him one night as he looked around the empty bar-room and heard shouts and jovial laughter coming from the hall. Formerly, many of the same young men had passed their evenings in his tavern.

The first evening the old stranger met with the class he made a short inaugural address. “I understand,” said he, “that I am reported to be an ex-pugilist, and that, having retired from business, I am now turning my knowledge of pugilism to account in making a living. Let me inform you at once that I am not, and never was, a professional pugilist. In my youth I was fond of practising with the gloves, but only on a few occasions have I ever found it necessary to make use of the skill I then acquired.”

Here a smile passed around the class.

"Still," continued the speaker, "I value the practice for several reasons. There may be times when peaceful persons will have to defend themselves against violence and bullying, and in such cases I think a man is justified in resorting to self defence. Or there might be cases where you would feel it to be your duty to defend a lady or a child or other helpless persons from the brutal violence of some lawless fellow, and you would do so, of course. But I value it for another reason: it is an excellent exercise. It trains the eye, the motor nerves, and brings into play many muscles that are little used, except as the body may be put into certain positions; but if I thought any young man here would ever be induced to take up pugilism by what he might learn in these evenings, I would stop before going further, and dismiss you. Pugilism is wrong in every particular, and can only result in the lowering of manhood and the degradation of character. Even the pugilist's victories are downward steps to inevitable and hopeless ruin. Avoid it as you value your manhood and character. However, I believe you may acquire proficiency in the use of the gloves without ever being led into any danger by it."

He stopped, and picking up the gloves, was about to call on someone, when he was greeted with hearty applause from the class. He was pleased that the young men appreciated good advice, and he acknowledged it.

Both Arthur and Dr. Sam had taken tickets. Arthur had joined rather from curiosity about the

stranger, and Dr. Sam because he wanted to mingle as much as possible with the young men of the neighborhood for the good he might be able to do them. Both were struck with the readiness and fluency of the stranger's inaugural address. Arthur's curiosity became almost painful. "Who can he be, anyway?" he said to himself over and over again.

"I may now ask him one question without appearing impertinent. We must call him by some name, or how can we get along?" But on second thought Arthur decided to let someone else do this; so he spoke to Jack McNair, who was not far away: "Find out what name we shall know him by."

"Well, I am pretty long," said the stranger, in reply to Jack's interrogation; "you may address me as Longfellow, if you will promise not to expect me to be too poetic," and his quiet, easy manner in replying produced considerable amusement.

Mr. Longfellow (for as such we may also now know him) stipulated that he must command, and when he called out, "Gloves off!" the contest should end. Sometimes he would call upon one of the young men to spar with himself, and after giving instructions on such matters as "guarding," "ducking," "leading," "jabbing," "side-stepping," etc., he would close by saying, "Now, I am going to touch you on the right ear, or the left jaw, or over the heart; now guard that spot and keep me out." The scuffle that followed would elicit roars of laughter, for without fail the instructor's glove went to the spot indicated. Sometimes he would call up two and give them directions,

and as the bout proceeded would point out when and where they had made correct or incorrect movements. In case either began to show any temper he would call out, "Gloves off!" and step between them.

One method he introduced that gave more than ordinary amusement was to daub the tips of the gloves slightly in lampblack, and then "spar for points." Those who wished to take part in this exercise must wear a white shirt, and it is needless to say they did not wear it the second time before going to the laundry. These daubs of black on various parts of the face and clothing gave a very grotesque appearance, the full extent of which was not realized until the young man stood before his own mirror. As a compensation Mr. Longfellow generally allowed himself to receive a goodly number of spots also. In these exercises the time passed very quickly, too quickly for Mr. Stenson, for the instructor had no trouble in keeping them till a late hour with no abatement of interest. In the nine lessons of the first month he had something new for them every night, and when the month was over they asked him to continue. Stenson felt like refusing the hall, but feared the after-result if he should; so Longfellow agreed to give six lessons more.

There was a good deal of opposition among the older people to the young men spending their evenings "learning to fight," and many of them wondered what the end of it all would be. They were expecting to hear that the young fellows would "choose sides and go at it" some night, and direful conse-

quences might follow. But they knew that their sons went out there even more than two nights in the week previously, and some who knew that several times their sons had come home intoxicated, had now to admit that they came home "without even a smell of liquor upon them," and with the exception of the tattoo work, they saw nothing wrong, for the young men gave splendid reports of the instructor, who had became a favorite.

Even Neil McNair had to admit that Jack now "cam hame sober instead o' drunk, as he used ta"; but Neil clung to the opinion that the man with the red shirt was a villain, and nothing could move him.

"It's a' lees aboot him no' bein' a prize-fechter. If he's no' that he's somethin' waur, or hoo could he a dibbed big Steve?"

This was said to Jack one night, when he came home and found his father still reading in the *Leader* one of Gladstone's great parliamentary efforts, in which he drove red-hot oratorical arrows into Disraeli's foreign policy. The longer Neil read the more enraged he had become, until at length he had pitched the paper across the table, declaring aloud that such lies ought not to be put into the *Leader*. Then he snatched off his "specks," and was rising up to get his pipe when Jack stepped in, with his face in a magnificent tattoo of black spots.

"In the name o' guidness, Jeck!" said Neil; and then the inrush of a new emotion, which counter-vailed the irritation from political causes, almost robbed him of both speech and action. Jack began

to laugh, and Neil saw he was quite sober and uninjured; so the old man had to seek consolation in his pipe, which loosened his tongue and inspired the tirade against the "red-shirted villain."

The subject of these uncomplimentary remarks spent his days quite pleasantly. He sometimes went out "berrying," and several times brought back a well-filled pail, which he handed over to Mrs. Stenson. He found this warm work, and had his long hair trimmed. He further induced coolness by purchasing a Canadian straw hat, which greatly changed his appearance. He also took whole days at fishing, and frequently brought back a good-sized bag full of fine stream fish. On one of these occasions he met with Joker, who had obtained a holiday with permission to go fishing on condition that he would bring back a dozen fish worth eating. He let this out to his new acquaintance, and when a few minutes later Joker had to climb over the stream to get his hook loosened, Longfellow, on pretence of fixing his own hook, knelt down and slipped a dozen of his best fish into Joker's pail, and then strolled on. That night Joker received high commendation for the fish he had caught, and when he saw them roasted and put out on plates, he concluded that roasting a fish "swelled it out, and made it longer."

Longfellow fished on up the stream, and it chanced that the stream took its rise in two large springs, one of which was on the further side of Neil McNair's farm and the other on the farm next. Neil was generous, and forbade no one to fish in his stream

provided they did not destroy his crops. He was out doing some harvest work and saw an old man, respectably dressed, coming along slowly, here and there casting his hook, and to Neil's surprise bringing out some fine trout. As he came near, he called over : " I was wondering if I was trespassing ; if I am, I'll pay damages."

" Na, na," said Neil, " there'll be na damages ; ye're welcome ta a wheen troot."

" They are fine ! " said the other, his keen black eyes speaking more delight than his words. " I never saw better but once, in the Old Country, when I had the privilege of fishing for half a day on the estate that afterwards came into the possession of the Earl of Beaconsfield.

" Did ye ken him ? " asked Neil, quickly.

" I have met him," said the other, " and have spoken with him, I may say ; but I had no intimate acquaintance with him. He was known then as Disraeli, and was distinguished more as a literary man than as a politician ; but he is very clever, and a great power in British politics just now."

That was enough for Neil. Disraeli ! The name of his ideal political hero, in whom was embodied all that was politically great in England at the time. It acted like a magnet on steel, and caught Neil as firmly as the hook caught the trout that the old gentleman at that moment drew out of the creek, with this difference only, that the fish was caught intentionally. Neil was in the presence of a man who had seen and spoken to Disraeli, and he was sure that he must be a

supporter of his foreign policy, for he had spoken of him as being "a great power." He did not know who the man might be, of course; but it was not unusual to see men from the city fishing in this stream. Nothing would satisfy Neil now but the stranger "maun cam in ta denner."

As the two went up the hill to the house the stranger cast keen side glances at Neil. He now recalled having seen him at the tavern. But had he ever met him at any other place? Had he ever heard that voice before? He thought so; but perhaps not; for he had met so many in his day. And yet Neil's voice appeared to recall something in the far past, for certain voices, once heard, leave mental impressions that never fade away.

When Mrs. McNair met them at the house, Neil simply said to the stranger, "This is my wuman," and passed into the house. He observed no omission. One idea held him now. He was intent on learning more about Disraeli from one who knew him.

They sat down to a sumptuous dinner, such as a well-to-do farmer's home can serve in the harvest season. Such ham and eggs! such rich, yellow butter, and thick cream! such beautiful white, home-made bread piled generously high on the bread-tray! and for desert, an immense dish of luscious berries. There was profusion combined with taste, and Neil and his friend brought keen appetites to prove the excellence of Mrs. McNair's culinary skill. The stranger told his host and hostess that he had not enjoyed such a dinner for many a month; it was so

seldom he had the privilege of going into a farmer's home. His grasp of British politics was comprehensive, and as the dinner proceeded he caught the line of Neil's political predilections. The latter was very much pleased with his views, especially because that in one well-turned sentence he made reference to "our noble Queen."

"Ha anither dish o' berries, man," pressed Neil. "Ye ken we're but few th' day. Jeck is awa helpin' Daysmore wi' his ates, and I fear he wud be late this morn, for he was oot late last nicht." Then, having switched off one line on which he felt strongly, he got on another, upon which he felt almost as strongly, and proceeded :

"There's a red-shirted villain cam amang us a wheen weeks syne, an' I fear he's leedin' awa' some o' the young lads, and Jeck's amang them. They ha' quaer times in the hall, I'm thinkin', at nichts. A wheen nichts syne Jeck cam in a' dabbed owre wa' soot, like a Kalathumpian, sa that I didna ken what had happened ta him. The idle rascal should be driven oot o' th' place, and if the thing is na stapped sune I'll write the palice ta cam oot and red the reel, for I can see na guid o' them dabbin' ither's faces wi' soot."

"Do they get liquor in the hall?" asked the stranger.

"I ha na reeson ta think sa, for Jeck has aye cam hame sober sa far," replied Neil.

The stranger remarked that likely it would soon die out, and, indeed, did not appear to be much concerned; so after a short return to affairs in Europe

and the East, he prepared to return to the creek. When it came to bidding Mrs. McNair good-bye her curiosity could not permit the stranger, who had enjoyed her hospitality, to go away without learning his name. She had an old autograph album, in which were entered the names of many friends and many crude attempts at poetry. She now produced the album and requested the favor of the stranger's autograph. As for Neil, he regarded such things as nonsense. He had never once condescended to look into this album, much less put his own autograph therein. "Havers!" was what he generally exclaimed when he saw it brought forth. So having secured his pipe, he stepped out on the "stoop" at the back of the house to have a smoke.

The stranger took up the pen and wrote, in a hand of wonderful delicacy and symmetry, a verse from the "Psalm of Life," below which he subscribed "Henry Longfellow."

When Jack returned in the evening he was told of the stranger whom they had entertained.

"You have had a call from Longfellow, who is giving the glove lessons," said Jack.

Mrs. McNair also thought it was he, but Neil laughed at them both for entertaining such an opinion.

"But look at the name," said Jack.

"That's the name o' the poet," replied Neil.

"He told us to call him Longfellow," returned Jack.

"Hoot, man," said Neil, "da ye think I wadna ken yon red-shirted desperado again, if I met him? Da ye think I wad tak' him in my hoose, and me an

elder in the church? Ye had better no bring him aboot here, Jeck, I'll tell ye, or it'll be the waur for ye baith."

"But he does not always wear the same clothes," said Jack. "I have never seen that red shirt on him since that evening."

"No, Jeck, replied Neil, "but he maun aye ha the same evil face. He canna lay that aside, and this man had na sic coontenance."

"It's him," said Jack.

"It isn't," said Neil.

"The name's on my side," said Jack.

"Did he ca' himsel' Henry?" asked Neil.

"No," replied Jack, "he gave no first name."

"Weel, then," exclaimed Neil, "surely that's plain, for the name's on my side! Ye needna tell me that yer fechter wad ha ony sic respect for Disraeli, and oor veesitor has baith seen and spoken ta him. Na, na, Jeck! you're a' wrang; it's no him." And he would say no more, but turned to his paper to read some new report about the Eastern question, which appeared under startling headlines.

But he found some difficulty in keeping his attention on the news he was reading, for there remained a doubt on his mind that possibly Jack and his mother were right. He had forgotten to ask the stranger's name. What if Jack were right? "What a souch it wad mak' amang the neeburs," he said to himself; "but if it was him, he kens what I think o' him; and even an elder might be deceived, for disna Satan himsel' cam aften as an angel o' licht?"

So mused Neil McNair.

III.

A NEW POLICY.

DAVE STENSON found a new cause for irritation the day after Hedley returned from college, when a letter from the Principal reached him, informing him that his son would not be received back at the Fall term "on account of his dissipations through drink and otherwise," as such conduct involved the reputation of the institution. This letter accounted for Hedley's early return for vacation. Mr. and Mrs. Stenson decided to keep the matter to themselves, and they did for two days longer, when a lynx-eyed reporter of the *City Journal* inserted a short paragraph about the dissipations of certain young students, which had resulted in "one named Stenson" being in the police court and fined for drunkenness. Dave cursed the reporter and burned the paper, but not the report. He was going to enter a suit for slander, but the remembrance of the Principal's letter restrained him. The problem with him and his wife now was what to do with Hedley, and it had become a really serious one. *Something must be done.*

One thing they might have done: cut down the sign, closed the bar-room, destroyed its furnishings, and poured out a libation to the "Liquor Devil." This

would have made reformation easier for him ; but if someone had suggested this to his mother she would have asked them what they were "to do for a living."

"Have you any plan for Hedley ?" asked Mrs. Stenson, as she and Dave sat alone one evening in early August. It was "class night," and he was not needed at the bar.

"I can see nothing ahead but for him to go to work on our farm," replied her husband. (There was a small farm attached to the hotel.)

"I think," said Mrs. Stenson, "if he were married to some good girl he would settle down all right. I would want him to marry a *real good* girl, or none. You know someone who was pretty wild until he married—"

"A good girl," interjected Dave with a smile on his wife. "I don't know who would have him after such a report getting out about his city experience," continued the father. "Have you any girl in view for him ? If you have, and think you can make it go, we'll start you on the road to-morrow at seven."

Mrs. Stenson took Dave's pleasantry all in good part. The idea of "match-making" was a little humorous to both of them, but she frankly answered, "I have."

"Who ?" asked Dave.

"Kate Medford," replied the mother.

"I don't think you can make that go," said Dave, with as much good nature in a laugh as he had shown for many a day.

“ Why not ? ” asked his wife.

“ Because the teacher’s in there, Dr. Sam as they call him ; you’re too late in laying your plans,” replied Dave.

“ Kate will never have anything to do with that son of a poor old drunken woman ; why, what are the Martins ? ” said she, contemptuously.

“ Oh, well, the boy don’t drink, and never will, I’m sure,” answered Dave ; “ and you know, when you come to talk about drink and drunkenness, you are getting on thin ice.”

She felt the full force of the remark. What was her son ? she mentally asked herself. However, since Dave made no objection to her scheme, she would try. “ I cannot do worse than fail,” she said.

“ Oh, yes ; you can,” replied her husband. “ You can do several things, and you can make people laugh at you if you fail.”

The tramp of feet coming down the stairs from the hall put an end to this conversation. But Mrs. Stenson had resolved to try, and she set her mind at work to plan details. She realized that a matter so delicate required great tact and discretion on her part.

In another home matters had reached a point that required attention. Dr. Sam had been busy since vacation began gathering the harvest of his little farm, and by an exchange of labor with his neighbors he was getting it off. But his heart ached sore, again and again, when he came in at night to find no supper prepared and his mother intoxicated. Where she managed to obtain the liquor was a mystery ; he

saw some of the Stensons drive past occasionally, but he did not see them stop at his home ; besides, his mother obtained the liquor much more frequently than he saw any of them on the road. His delicacy had restrained him from saying much to his mother about the matter ; but now he felt he had reached the limit of endurance. Since she had passed the condition of self-restraint, it became his duty to see that no one ministered to her depraved appetite.

He determined to find out where she obtained the liquor, and proceeded by the method of induction, first eliminating two sources of supply, namely, the Stensons and herself ; for she seldom went from home, and therefore could not supply herself. This made it absolutely certain that someone was bringing it to her, or placing it within her reach. He had also begun to notice a sort of rotation in the times when she became intoxicated ; it was generally on Tuesday or on Friday. Once he observed, when Tuesday was a rainy day and he had been in the house most of the day, she remained sober ; but he had come to look for her to be intoxicated on one or both of these days. He was thinking the matter over one day as he worked near the road, when the alarm horn of a grocery pedlar rang out. The little, short, stout man who was driving the light wagon, with a covered red box, was named Rory Clubb, a cripple in both legs, who made his living by gathering farm produce in exchange for groceries. He stopped when he came near Dr. Sam, and chatted a few minutes about the harvest, the weather, and such things. Rory compli-

mented him on the excellent appearance of his crops ; then, seeing Mrs. Martin going out to the gate, he drove on.

Not till that moment did it occur to Dr. Sam that there might be some connection between Rory's calls and his mother's intoxication ; but now the suspicion flashed upon him. Was Rory the agent who brought her the liquor ? Was that the reason she had remained sober the wet Tuesday when Rory could not come, for his days were Tuesdays and Fridays ? He went at once to the house for a cool drink and met his mother as she came in, but he saw no bottle in her hand, nor observed any appearance of such in her clothing. As he was leaving the house he saw that Rory had driven on to the watering trough which received the overflow of the spring by the roadside, near the corner of Dr. Sam's farm, and was watering his horse. While the animal drank, he walked back a few rods along the fence, and reached through ; then he returned to the wagon, and drove on. That same afternoon Dr. Sam saw his mother go toward the spring, carrying a pail, as she frequently did. The spring was not visible from where he was working ; so as she passed out of sight he started for the house. Keeping himself hidden by the orchard trees, he observed her go to the spring for water ; as she returned, she stopped where Rory had been seen, and, thrusting her arm through, took out something, which she slipped into her pocket. That evening she was intoxicated.

After getting his own evening meal, Dr. Sam went

down to the spot where he had seen the two thrust their arms through ; there, in a piece of green window blind paper, was an empty pint flask that smelled of liquor. He took it with him to the house. Going into his mother's room, where she lay asleep, he opened her little private cabinet, and there found another flask, the mate of the one he had taken from the grass.

It was the work of only a few minutes to put a thin layer of gray sealing wax on the bottom of each bottle, and stamp this with his own monogram ; then he returned each flask to the place from which he had taken it.

That same evening, he wrote the license inspector, telling him the circumstances of the case, and also requesting him to be at "The Briton's Lodge" on Friday evening when Rory Clubb would pass that way.

When Friday came he managed to be employed in about the same location as on Tuesday. In due time Rory appeared. Again he drew up and chatted with Dr. Sam. Again Mrs. Martin went out. Again Rory stopped and further on stopped again at the watering place, and again put his hand through the fence into the clump of grass. Dr. Sam saw it all as he went in for a drink of cool water. He saw no groceries, and when he asked his mother what her purchases were, she replied that she had taken a due bill, Rory not having what she needed. Dr. Sam feared this was a fabrication. At the noon hour he managed to get a look into her cabinet again, and there stood the other flask full, which he easily recognized by his monogram.

Dr. Sam now exercised his first act of authority over his weak mother. He took the flask away. When evening was come he went to the tavern, taking the flask in his pocket. The license inspector sat in the front sitting-room looking for him. When Rory drove up Dr. Sam stepped in and said:

“Our man is here.”

Going up to Rory, the inspector said:

“I must detain you a little while, as I want to look through your wagon.”

“What for?” asked Rory quickly. “What right have you to look into my wagon?”

“As license inspector,” said the other, “I have authority to investigate any place where I think illicit selling of liquor is going on, and I have reason to suspect you.”

He proceeded to inspect Rory’s box and soon drew forth a shallow drawer which slid in under the seat. In this lay a dozen bottles on soft batting, and among them the empty one bearing Dr. Sam’s monogram. Dr. Sam now handed the inspector the flask he had brought and a comparison of the two revealed to Rory the secret mark on both.

Rory saw that he was beaten at his own game, and confessed.

“Will you pay your fine here, or will you let it go to court?” asked the inspector.

“How much is it?” asked the little peddler, very much distressed.

“I could make it fifty dollars,” said the inspector. “but for a first offence it will be half that sum.”

Dave Stenson had witnessed the whole affair. Turning to him, Rory asked, "Can you help me out Dave? You know where I got the liquor."

"Go to——," was Dave's reply, as he turned and walked into the bar-room.

"Did he supply you with liquor for this purpose?" asked the inspector.

"Yes; he did," replied Rory, in hot anger. "He was the first to propose the thing to me, and now you see how he treats me. Are you going to do nothing with him?" he asked again, as he handed out the amount of the fine.

"Never you mind. His case will come up later," replied the man of authority.

Through the screen and the lace curtain of the open window, Mrs. Stenson heard those fateful words, "His case will come up later." She construed them to mean that their license would be taken from them, or that it would not be renewed when it would expire; and then what would they do for a living? There would be more money in the place if sold while under license than without it. Perhaps if they should lose the license they might not be able to get a buyer. She resolved that she would endeavor to persuade Dave once more to offer the place for sale.

When Dave was told those fateful words of the inspector it made him uneasy and irritable. He was afraid that his wife's interpretation was the correct one and he was more open to advice.

She so far prevailed upon him that the next day a small board, about a foot square, appeared on a

broom handle at the back of the house, facing the concession, placed in a row of sunflowers about half grown, and bearing the notice: "THIS PLACE FOR SALE."

Joker happened to see the board one evening when he came up for Jerry's mail, as he stood on the store verandah, and out of curiosity he walked over and read the inscription. Seeing Hedley, he asked if they intended the sign for the sunflowers or for the people: "Because," said Joker, "if it was for the people, I thought you would have put it out in front of the house."

The sunflowers appeared to think it was for them, however, for they soon monopolized it, drooping their heads affectionately over it, and spreading their broad leaves before its face. But they soon hid it from the vulgar gaze of curious people, especially boys, for some of them even dared to make a target of it.

Mrs. Stenson had not inquired where the sign had been put up. She knew it was up, and it was a great consolation that Dave had at last consented to sell, and had put up a sign to that effect. She discovered its location one day after school began. She was in the garden getting some dinner vegetables, when she suddenly became aware of stones flying about her head. Hearing the voices of boys across the fence she called out, "Boys! Boys!" "Oh, beg pardon," said one penitent lad. "We did not know you were there. We was pluggin' at the sign." Mrs. Stenson's reprimand to Dave was of the nature of a joke, which

he took good-naturedly, saying that he thought the "sign" would do as well there as anywhere else. Dave's mind had been more at ease lately. The license inspector had not troubled him as yet, and Hedley had also been keeping sober. Gradually the routine life of the tavern was resumed, and their thoughts returned to the old channels.

Mrs. Martin did not ask her son about the removal of the liquor, and the next trip Rory made he promised Dr. Sam he would sell no more liquor to his mother. For weeks following they enjoyed peace in their home, and Dr. Sam began to hope that his mother might yet be reclaimed, for with the temptation removed she had been sober.

Apply this principle, or apply a law which is based upon and embodies such a principle, throughout our country, and we have reason to believe that much of the evils of drunkenness would disappear. People are not made drunkards at the fountain; but it is irrational to expect that weak ones will keep sober when that which a depraved and vitiated appetite craves can be obtained conveniently. Reason, common-sense, observation, and experience, as well as humanity, are all on the side of those who plead for the legal prohibition of the liquor traffic in our country.

IV.

THE REFUSAL.

DURING the last two weeks of the glove lessons, Dr. Sam was teaching, which prevented his attendance at the hall. His respect for Longfellow had increased, and he invited him to visit the school. The writing lesson was brought on while he was present. He soon became interested in it, and passing from seat to seat, he took the pen several times, and helped the pupils in making some of the difficult curves on certain letters, such as K, Q, R and G. When he shaped a beautiful O in Joker's copybook, the latter created some excitement among the pupils by crying out, "Why, you can beat the teacher." Dr. Sam had been following him, and soon recognized that he had met a master in the art of writing. Later, at his request, Longfellow wrote his name on a few new text-books, and Dr. Sam thought the penmanship was perfect.

"I wish we could induce you to give some lessons in this," said he to Longfellow.

"I would do that," replied Longfellow, "if you could get a good class."

"That would depend on the fee, to some extent, I suppose," said Dr. Sam.

"There will be no fee," replied Longfellow, "so far as my part is concerned. It will do me good to practise a little, for lately I have not been doing much writing."

"Well, I can assure you of a good class," said the teacher, "and I have no doubt the trustees will let us have the school. I will arrange the matter to begin as soon as you are through with the other engagement." The next day he made it known to the scholars that all of twelve years and over might enter the "writing school."

The engagement in the hall came to a close in due time without any serious results, either to the bodies or to the morals of the young men. Jack McNair had spoken to some of the class about giving Longfellow some present as a mark of esteem, since he would take no remuneration; so it was decided to present him with a gold-headed cane. Dr. Sam was asked to prepare a short and suitable address, and the last night he came with the others and read it, after which this token of respect was presented by Jack on behalf of the young men. Longfellow accepted the cane, and made a few appropriate remarks. He had enjoyed the evenings they had spent together, and hoped they would make only a right use of anything they had learned. He had been asked to give instruction in writing in the school, he said, and if any of them desired to attend he would be pleased to meet them there. Then the class gave three cheers for the instructor, three for the landlord, and finally three for the Queen, and the meeting broke up.

"I'm glad it's over," said Dave Stenson to his wife that night. "I have got forty dollars for the hall for about two months, but I've lost more than that in the business; besides, I don't believe many of the young fellows will care to come near me again. Why, he has been preaching temperance to them all through this thing, and now he's going to start a writing school; but not if I can stop him, and if he goes on he'll pay for it in some shape."

On the pretence of looking for hay he did actually go the next day to the trustees and endeavor to persuade them not to grant the school for such a purpose; but he was too late, for two of the trustees had given Dr. Sam permission to proceed with the class. He also found that his personal influence, compared with that of the noble young teacher, was as the small dust of the balance, and it mortified him deeply.

"Why do you keep this stranger about your place?" asked one of the trustees.

"Oh, he won't be there long," was the reply.

"Does he pay for his board?"

"Oh, yes," said Dave.

"Does he drink?" continued the trustee.

"Never touches anything," was the reply.

"Well, that's not a bad report," said the other.

"But he knows nothing about writing," said Dave. "I have seen his hand."

"The teacher showed me some of his writing, in a book he had with him," said the trustee, "and it was so perfect it looked to me more like stamped

letters. Perhaps you are afraid he may take up too many evenings with the young people."

"That's just it," said Dave. "My boy is just wasting his time over these things."

"And his time is very precious," was the sarcastic reply.

Dave had no better success with the second trustee. The third, a man named Pilling, was not in favor of giving the school for such a purpose, and extended Dave more sympathy. Nevertheless, the writing class began, and among the pupils were Joker, Minerva, Arthur, Kate, Dr. Sam, and Jack McNair. The first night Longfellow received from each of the members of the class a specimen of his or her best writing, endorsed. They met four nights in the week.

Dave Stenson now took a petty revenge by notifying the trustees that they could not any longer make use of his pump to obtain water for the school. Within two weeks the scholars rejoiced in the possession of a well thirty feet deep and a new pump, so the problem of water supply was rationally solved.

During the vacation Steve Fitzhugh's broken jaw had kept him at home. His humiliation had been deep, and he had privately resolved to go away quietly from the neighborhood as soon as he would be able to return to his ship. Steve knew that he was not popular, and knew also that many would be pleased at his defeat, and this belief only stirred in him an intense misanthropic feeling so far as his own native locality was concerned. He had heard of the glove lessons in the hall; but he treated the whole

matter with contempt. To some of the gentleman friends who called on him, Steve had stated, and endorsed the statement with much profanity, that he was "going up one of those nights to clean out the whole crowd;" but the night had not arrived when the glove lessons were over. In truth, Steve's intentions were far from such. As to the master of ceremonies at the hall, Steve knew he could not touch him; but the desire rankled deep within him to get even with the man who had so suddenly dimmed his reputation as a pugilist.

Good and bad angels visited Steve. Among the good were Arthur's mother, who came to see him a few days after the trouble occurred. She frankly told him that she was sorry that he and Arthur had had a dispute, and hoped there would be no more of it. Steve believed her, and resolved that for her sake, if for nothing else, he would say no more to Arthur.

Mrs. Medford did not "talk religion" to Steve. In her good judgment the time was inopportune. She did better; she lived Christ in his presence, and did those things which the spirit of Christ prompted her to do. Many of those little motherly things that win a way to the hardest heart, that no amount of preaching or praying could move, Mrs. Medford did for Steve. Who would ever have thought that a big burly ruffian, would care anything about fresh luscious berries and Jersey cream? or a tender chicken with rich current jelly? But Mrs. Medford thought of such things, and carried them to him daintily prepared;

nor did Steve disappoint her expectations. Thus without talking religion she spoke to his heart the things of Christ, and without preaching she conveyed to his soul the deep lessons of love. Steve's rough, turbulent nature gave way at the touch of her beautiful spirit.

A young woman of the neighborhood, who had united with the Salvation Army, also visited Steve. She was a modest, timid girl, very devout, and also very pretty. Steve had never spoken with any of her sect, and a call from such an individual was unexpected, and rather inauspicious. It was with some hesitation that his mother admitted her into the room where her son spent most of his time.

"Good morning," said she, "the Lord bless you."

Steve cast a half-bewildered look on the oddly dressed visitor, but made no reply.

"You have not been well for some time, I understand," she continued. "Our people make it a rule to call on everyone, especially any who are sick and those who are wanderers."

Still there was no reply, and she went on :

"I was once like you, Mr. Fitzhugh. I loved the pleasures of sin, and often they brought me to grief, just as yours have done ; but I am now saved, hallelujah ! Are you saved yet, Mr. Fitzhugh ?"

Steve still repressed himself. He did not care to hear that his evil deeds had brought him to grief ; but, mingled with this feeling, he experienced also an astonished admiration for the young girl who had the

moral courage to speak to him about his wrong-doing.

"I would like to pray with you, if you do not object," she continued.

"I do object," answered Steve, now very angry.

"Then may I sing a piece for you? Let me sing this one," and she recited the first line:

"We're going home to wear a crown."

"No; I don't want you to sing for me. You may go home and wear what you like, but don't come here any more." Then, turning to his mother, he said:

"Mother, take this lunatic out of the house."

His mother arose quickly and beckoned the young woman away, and as the latter timidly left the room she said to Steve, "The Lord bless you."

Two things remained in Steve's memory: The young girl was very beautiful, and that parting benediction.

Evil angels visited Steve, especially on Sunday afternoons, when numbers of young men, former companions, would gather in, much to the annoyance of his parents. Among these Sunday callers was Dave Stenson, who generally came toward evening driving his splendid "Hambletonian" grey mare, "Kite." His pockets were always well supplied with flasks of different liquors, and also with cigars of some good brand. One Sunday he induced Jack McNair to come with him, and over glasses of fresh liquor he and Steve were reconciled, for unity among Dave's friends was essential to the success of all his plans.

Dave also tried to bring about a reconciliation between Longfellow and Steve; for the latter, under the convivial influence of Dave's liquor, had promised to visit the tavern again, and the morning of his expected reappearance Dave had broached the subject to Longfellow. The latter replied that he would spend the afternoon in fishing, and had an engagement for the evening that would occupy him until the hour for writing class.

"But I am anxious for you to meet him and have a talk. You know, after all, Steve is not a bad fellow. I think if you could only talk with him and get to know him a little better, and let him find out your good heart, everything would come around again, and you would be friends," pressed the importunate landlord; but the other stood him off.

"There are many others that I would much rather talk with," replied Longfellow. "I think I know him quite well, and I am not aware that I can profit by his company or conversation. I am quite indifferent as to what opinion he may have of my goodness of heart. By the way, I saw a placard up at the back of your house. Do you intend to sell out?"

"Well, yes; yes; that is the intention," answered Dave, meditatively, and smiling a little, as he remembered his wife's mild hypocrisy. "My wife is anxious to go out of the business for Hedley's sake. You know he sometimes gets on more sail than he can carry."

"How much do you want?" asked Longfellow.

"Two thousand five hundred," replied Dave. "Or

without the large barn, which might better go with the farm, two thousand."

"That's too much," replied Longfellow. "If you put it up at auction you could not get more than a thousand for it."

"That may be," said Dave; "but I don't have to put it up at auction." Then he drew himself up with an independent air, and knocked the ashes off his cigar against the horse-post. Replacing the cigar again in his cherry lips, he continued:

"I would rather burn it down than put it into the auctioneer's care; and perhaps I may have to do that if these prohibition fanatics get their way. But they don't get it, by——, if we can hold on; and we can hold on, too. We can turn out any political party or put any party into power that will give us what we want; just as our grand secretary, Swiller, told us at the last meeting of the Association. That is our policy for the campaign, when it comes. These fellows know they cannot be elected without the liquor vote, and so they court us, and we, in turn, can dictate our own terms of support. We stand together, and we don't care a—— what party goes in, so long as we are sure of our trade."

Without taking any notice of Stenson's braggadocio, Longfellow said: "If you really want to sell, tell me your lowest figure."

"What do you want to find out for?" asked Stenson, becoming interested.

"Because I want to buy you out."

"You do?" asked Dave.

“Yes, I do,” said the other.

“What would you do with it?” asked Dave, again.

“Well, I would not burn it down,” replied Longfellow; “but I would take it down, and on the site I would erect a building suitable for a reading-room and public library. This community should have one. I think that any community that can afford to keep up a tavern like yours could bear the comparatively small expense of a public library.”

“If I am too high in my price, what would you give?” asked Dave.

“For the tavern, hall, and an acre of ground, I would give fifteen hundred dollars,” replied Longfellow. “You can think the matter over and let me know.”

“Are you in a position to pay cash?” asked Dave.

“Certainly,” was the reply.

This was new information on an important subject, and at that moment a dark seed-thought dropped into Dave Stenson’s mind, and the desire to carry out the suggestion induced him to tolerate Longfellow longer in his house.

Steve Fitzhugh arrived at “The Briton’s Lodge” early in the afternoon, and he received a great family ovation. Mrs. Stenson was both excited and delighted, and honored the occasion by wearing her black brocaded silk gown, than which no lady in the common walks of life in those days could wish for a better. She wore also her wedding jewellery. To look again at these souvenirs of her wedding day, recalled that important occasion so vividly that she felt a

lump rising in her throat, while her eyes glistened in reciprocation to the diamond of her ring, as she bent over it in the jewel case.

Steve felt indeed that he was honored, and he acknowledged it with his utmost liberality. Everyone who came in or near the bar-room that afternoon had to drink with him, and judging from the rapidity with which Steve's money changed pockets, there must have been many drinks served, or there must have been—something else. He paid all treats himself, and paid with bills. If change were given back, he would sweep the coins into his pocket uncounted; if no change came back, none was asked for. Steve was in his old element once more. Oh, what a relief, after weeks of confinement, to be among those who knew how to look up to him, and anticipate every desire! It was a relief also to Dave Stenson to have such a "run" in business after a period of stagnation. He felt it in his pocket that evening to the extent of thirty dollars of this erring young man's money.

"Say! this is splendid, old man," said Steve, when Dave led him into the room to a six o'clock dinner, (for by this time he needed someone to lead him), and he surveyed the well-spread table bearing a couple of dainty roast fowl at the farther end. "I haven't seen better since I attended the sailor's banquet in Detroit, a year ago now."

"Enjoy it, Steve," said Dave, "for you may never have another with us in the old stand again."

"How's that?" asked Steve.

"I'm going to sell out," answered Dave. "Come off,

Dave!" said the other. "You don't mean that, old man;" and simultaneously Mrs. Stenson had exclaimed, "Going to sell! What do you mean? Who to, Dave?"

"To Longfellow," replied Dave. Then there were more expressions of surprise from Mrs. Stenson, and swearing from Steve, for at this table a gentleman might swear in the presence of a lady. Nor were there any limitations about "not going too far with it."

Dave proceeded to tell them about the offer that Longfellow had made him. He concluded by looking over at his wife, as he said, "Now, my dear, what is your mind? You know I cannot sell without your consent."

"If you want to know my mind," said his wife, "it is this: I would not think of selling in the fall season, and have to look for a house so late in the year. Besides, the winter is your best season for business, and you have paid your license fee. It is very likely we would have to put in the winter in some little pokey place, and I could not endure it after living in this large, comfortable house. I will not leave here on such short notice. If Longfellow wanted it, why did he not speak earlier?"

"My dear," replied Dave, in a humorous tone, "you know it is not so very long ago that we advertised the house for sale. Perhaps he did not see our shingle up until lately, which I put in the back-yard for your sake. I knew you were anxious to sell the place, and I thought that whenever you looked out at the back

of the house you would see that I had agreed to do so."

This rather turned the laugh on Mrs. Stenson; but whether Dave spoke in earnest or in irony, it did not matter to her. She had made up her mind on the matter. Dave could not have her consent.

Let justice be done Dave Stenson. He would have closed the bargain with Longfellow had his wife given her consent. She had often, in the privacy of domestic life, urged him to go out of selling liquor for Hedley's sake. The opportunity which she had professed to be anxious for had come. She refused!

At eleven o'clock she went to her room. It was that same room in which, some weeks before, she had cried all night to Heaven that her boy might be saved from a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's doom. The memory of it all came vividly before her again, and she was constrained to ask herself, whether she was preferring to live in a large house, in sin and danger, rather than to live in a small house with her son and husband out of danger. The chill that came to her heart as she thought of what might yet come was not relieved by what she knew was going on in the room below. Conscience will find everyone alone some time.

In the room back of the bar-room, Steve, Hedley, Dave, and a number of others whom Steve had dragged in, quite willingly, however, held high carnival in wine and strong drink. Loud shouts, coarse laughter, profanity, singing, and clinking of glasses could be heard. From an early hour Steve had been

intoxicated. At no late hour Hedley was drunk, and when at an uncertain hour in the morning Dave was helped to his room, his wife saw what she had not seen for several years : her husband was so drunk that he had to be helped into bed.

Such was the consummation of another of those "big nights" at "The Briton's Lodge."

V.

TWO GIRLS.

THE saucy September winds manifested their contempt for all manner of luscious fruit in the large and well-kept orchard of Jerry Blackrock, as they sprang in among the branches, and seizing the fruit with transparent fingers, scattered it for yards about the trees. These troublesome foreigners appeared to have a special enmity against the apples, either because they regarded them as too assuming in bringing forth their numbers so largely, or because their powers of resistance were lesser than those of other fruits. At any rate, they fell in hundreds before the onslaught of the saucy west winds.

This was the place that Arthur and Kate had visited that hot June day when those incidents, narrated before, had happened. They had been royally entertained by the remarkable hostess of the splendid brick residence situated within the orchard.

Both Jerry and his wife were perplexed to know how to save the apple crop. Market there was none, in such a year, when every orchard was laden, and the "evaporator" had not yet made its appearance. These thrifty people, therefore, determined to make the most of the depredations of wind and storm by a

home process of evaporation, and would ask the assistance of the young people of the locality and call them together to a "paring bee."

Joker was set to work, and in the evenings of a week collected a large heap of the fallen fruit at the rear of the house. This toil was lightened by the thought of the approaching paring bee, and his anticipations were more than ordinarily bright. He understood the purpose of the bee; but never having been at one, he had some indistinct thought that the young people would necessarily sit in pairs to do the work. He was quite decided that Minerva should be his partner for that evening, and proceeded to lay his plans to accomplish this desire.

In the estimation of Mr. and Mrs. Blackrock, Joker could not be said to be "growing in grace." Jerry did not give much expression to his dissatisfaction with Joker's innocent conduct; but he had learned from Steve, when calling on the latter, that Joker had been present on the afternoon of the fight, and had witnessed Jerry's hasty departure. After learning this he had felt uneasy at the boy's presence in his home. However, he left it to his wife to open the way for his departure. She had not been so reserved in her fault finding and expressions of disapproval.

Mrs. Blackrock also had called on Steve several times while he had been confined to his home. On one occasion she met Mrs. Medford there, and they walked part of the way home together. Mrs. Blackrock had made reference to the unpleasant scandal into which Jerry had been drawn by his unfortunate

meeting with Steve in the city, and also by the occurrence at the tavern.

"I don't think it ever would have been known," said she, "if that impudent Joker had not been neglecting his school work, and at the tavern."

"Indeed," was Mrs. Medford's reply.

Then Mrs. Blackrock went on to tell her of the interruption that occurred when, for one night, family prayer was instituted in their home. Now, Mrs. Medford had a sweet and gentle nature, but withal a keen sense of the humorous; and when she laughed it was the same merry laugh of her girlhood, that set all her countenance aglow. Such a merry laugh now broke from her in spite of an effort to repress it.

"And were you annoyed at the lad for that?" she asked.

"I wonder who would not have been annoyed at such impertinence," said Mrs. Blackrock.

"I think if it had happened in our home," said Mrs. Medford, "I would have had a good laugh and let the matter go. You know Joker is only a boy, and was not brought up to having prayers in his home, if he ever had one. I hear so many speak of him as being full of fun, that I think he spoke quite innocently."

"I cannot look on things as lightly as you can, Mrs. Medford," said the other. "You do not know what it is to be tried with these 'Home' boys. They are just perfectly awful at times." Then, looking away towards the distant woods, as though her mind were tracing out some retrospective lines, far past but not forgotten, she said, "I often wish I had never given

away my little girl that I brought with me from the Old Country."

This gave a turn to the line of thought Mrs. Medford had been following, and she now collected herself far enough to say, "Indeed."

"Yes, I do," said Mrs. Blackrock with considerable energy, "but I suppose there would be no use of asking for her now."

"I would not think so," said Mrs. Medford. "It must be sixteen years since you gave her up, and you see that in that time the family would come to look upon her as one of themselves, and she would feel the same toward them, of course."

"Another thing is coming before us now, as we are growing older," continued Mrs. Blackrock; "we must leave our property to someone, and who will it be?"

"Oh, that should be no great source of trouble," said Mrs. Medford; "for that matter you could leave some of it to the girl, or you could leave it to charities, missions, or some good cause. You know 'Christ is worthy to receive riches.' Or you could leave some of your wealth to that boy, and you remember how it is promised, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.' It appears to me that rich people should have no difficulty in making a useful disposal of their wealth when the needs of the world are so great; and you have a large amount to leave, Mrs. Blackrock."

"We have, but that impudent brat will never get any of it," said the other, in a rude tone. "If I could only persuade those people to release my girl to me I would leave everything to her."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Medford, "your husband might think differently."

"He would do as I wished in that matter," replied Mrs. Blackrock.

"I am afraid that even that offer would not induce the family with whom she found a home to release her to you; but could you not get a girl from the 'Home' that would suit you?"

"I do not think I shall try again," said Mrs. Blackrock, in a tone that indicated discouragement.

During the latter part of the conversation there was a peculiar "offness" in the attitude of the women toward each other; but doubtless they understood each other, as they had been friends for many years. The conversation terminated at the gate opening into the lane that extended across Mrs. Medford's estate, and each went her way homeward, their thoughts dwelling on very similar subjects.

The same saucy winds that hurled down the apple crop as though it were of no value, brought up also troops of rain clouds, and Joker had to start to school under a threatening sky. Mrs. Blackrock's suggestion that he should take his great-coat and an umbrella proved a wise one, for when he was on his way only a short distance the rain came down. Only a few scholars came out, and Joker was pleased to observe that Minerva Daysmore and he were the only ones who represented their part of the section. He hoped this would give him an opportunity of asking Minerva to be his partner at the paring bee. All day he was in dread lest her father should drive out

for her in the evening ; but he did not come, and rain was still falling when he rushed out of school and got far down the road ahead of Minerva. Looking back, he saw she had no umbrella, so he waited.

“ You silly little know-nothing ! What are you standing still in the rain for ? ” she asked imperiously.

“ I’m waiting for you,” answered Joker. “ I can spare you this umbrella,” and he moved toward her, but her look was not encouraging.

“ I do not need your umbrella ; keep it yourself and go on home,” replied this independent young lady.

Joker’s heart began to sink. He was afraid he would not get the opportunity of asking Minerva to assist him at the paring bee ; but he ventured again.

“ You will get wet before you reach home, Minnie, and you had better take—”

“ You better yourself not have the impudence to call me Minnie, or you will get a cool bath in that ditch,” she broke in.

“ I wanted to tell you a secret, but you won’t let me ; I had something to say you would be glad to hear,” said Joker.

Without knowing it, Joker had put on the right bait, and Minerva began to nibble.

“ Well, you may tell me what it is, and never mind the umbrella,” said Minerva, becoming interested.

“ No,” said Joker, following up this advantage, “ I won’t tell you. You would not take my umbrella, so I shall keep it, and the secret, too.”

Minerva’s curiosity now weakened her resolution

to resist Joker. "I'll take it, Joker," she said, "and you tell me the secret."

Then Joker told her there was to be a paring bee at Jerry Blackrock's, and, of course, Minerva was wanted.

Minerva was delighted to hear it all. Her animated interest sparkled in her eyes and bloomed on her cheeks. She certainly would attend if mother would consent to it, and she would ask her that night.

At Jerry's gate Minerva proposed to give Joker the umbrella, but he insisted on her taking it home. "You need it, Minnie," said he again, unconsciously breaking stern commandments; but when he found himself receiving no rebuke, he felt glad of the mistake, and even ventured to say, "Good evening, Minnie;" at which Minerva laughed loudly and ran away, a part of her conduct that Joker did not know how to interpret. But he was glad that it was a laugh, and not a scolding, accompanied by a second push through the gate.

Now Joker had not acted wisely in asking Minerva to the paring bee. He had no instructions to ask any person. Mrs. Blackrock would never invite people to even a paring bee in that manner. She intended to make this bee more than an evening for having a certain quantity of apples pared. She would invite the best young people of the neighborhood, none but adults, and have a social hour after the work was done. She spent three hours of that wet afternoon in writing out invitations on fine-toned paper, and folded the sheets to fit beautiful square cream

envelopes. Twenty-five of these were given to Joker the next morning to drop into the post office, and most of them were invitations for two, as in the case of Arthur and Kate. In all, forty young people were invited. Joker wondered what all the letters meant, for he had never before been asked by Mrs. Blackrock to take more than two or three at any time. He was told they were invitations for the bee, a week from that night.

"You must be asking everybody around," he said, as he saw the huge bundle of envelopes.

"We are not going to have any of the parents, only the young people," said Mrs. Blackrock.

Unfortunately, Joker supposed this meant that all the young people were expected. It never occurred to him that the written invitation set limits to the number, for he supposed these invitations embraced the household, all but the parents, and all the young people would be welcome. To some of the school boys who saw him drop the letters in the slot, he explained the matter in this way.

"And may we all come, Joker?" asked Ben Wiley.

"You may, if you wish," replied Joker. "All the young folks around are going to be there, and it will be your own fault if you don't come too."

Joker spoke as he felt, very large. The exalted condition of mind into which his walk with Minerva the previous day had elevated him had not yet subsided, and he was in a spirit to play the host on a large scale.

With boys who were not accustomed to study the refinements of etiquette, this was a sufficient invitation. "Go!" cried Ben Wiley, "I guess we will. Have lots of apples ready, Joker. We all have paring machines. Hurrah! There'll be any amount of fun that night."

There were a half a dozen others who agreed with Ben. These told it to other boys, and even passed it on to the girls, and it grew into an understanding that Joker was authorized to ask all in the school that he deemed worthy of an invitation. It may easily be understood that, clothed with plenary powers of such a kind, Joker was much sought after that day.

Thus to the forty expected guests forty unexpected ones were added.

VI.

A WORK OF GENIUS.

MINERVA was not at school the day following the rain, and as Joker was anxious to find out whether or not she was coming to the bee, he decided to go to her home that night, making an excuse of the umbrella.

"Did Minerva bring home the umbrella to-day?" he asked of Mrs. Blackrock that evening.

"No; I guess you will have to go for it, since you were so kind in lending it," she replied.

"All right," said Joker, and slipping his mouth-organ into his pocket he went out; then, when out of hearing of the Blackrock home, he began to play, and continued right up to the Daysmore residence. Minerva heard him, and ran off upstairs. As Joker neared the house, he saw at that end, not traversed by the board walk, a hugh cask, laid on its side and propped sufficiently to prevent it rolling, into which the eaves-troughing had been pouring the rain-water all the day before, completely filling it. Mr. Daysmore, when placing it there two weeks previous, had inserted a new metal tap, so that Minerva and her mother had rejoiced in the luxury of abundance of rain-water for that day's washing. Joker went around that way to survey the strange looking object,

when his attention was drawn to a light streaming out of a window directly above the water tank. Stepping back a little, he saw Minerva through the unblinded window, and she was laughing as she finished lighting a lamp. Then he stepped to the kitchen door and knocked. The first response was a deep growl, and then he heard Mr. Daysmore's voice saying, "Lie down, Danger." "That's a queer name for a dog," thought Joker, "he must be a cross fellow, surely." He was ushered into the kitchen part of the house and given a chair.

"Whose boy are you?" asked Mr. Daysmore.

"No one's!" said the lad, "only myself's."

"Oh! and where do you come from?"

"From Jerry's," replied Joker.

"Oh, yes; I see now; you're Joker, are you?" said Mr. Daysmore, with a little laugh.

"That's what's the matter," said the lad, also smiling.

"I have heard Minerva speak of you. Let me see, she got your umbrella yesterday; it was very kind of you to loan it to her, but I guess she was too busy to-day to take it home. I'll get it for you," and he arose to get the umbrella; but just then the dog gave an ominous growl, and he stopped and called to Mrs. Daysmore to bring it out.

"Is Minerva at home?" asked Joker. "She was not at school to-day, and I wondered, er—the teacher, he—is she sick?" The face he had seen through the window did not look sick.

"Oh, no; she was helping her ma to-day," said

Minerva's father. "I'll call her," and going to the stairway he called, "Minerva, Minerva!"

"Well, pa," came back in well-known tones. "Come down, here's Joker to see you on important business." This was only a little pleasantry on her father's part, but Joker was more than pleased. "You're a brick," he said, under his breath.

But Minerva did not come down—not she. She had stolen out of her room on tip-toe, and taken a seat on the top stair. Two or three times her hands covered her mouth, while her body was convulsed with laughter. Go down, indeed! There was more amusement on that top stair all alone. After a time her father said, "I have heard that you play the mouth-organ grandly."

"A little," said Joker, drawing out the instrument, "but I could do better, or it would be better, if I had someone to chord. Is Minerva at home?—I mean, is she coming down?" Mrs. Daysmore now went to the stairway with a lamp, and at the top sat Minerva, her hand over her mouth, and when her mother said "Minerva, come down," one little fist went up in the air, and was shaken at her mother, while her face underwent very peculiar contortions, meant, of course, for dumb-show negatives.

After waiting for a time for Minerva, Joker began to play. On the whole he was not discouraged, for although Minerva had not come down to accompany him, her father had said she had spoken of him, which was some inspiration. Like an innocent bird singing to its mate, the little fellow poured his soul

into the mouth-organ, and trilled with a sweetness and perfection he had never before equalled. Even the laughter at the top step ceased, and a tear rolled down her cheek as she listened; while the music entered and searched out those deep emotional abysses of her own soul, so richly endowed with latent musical treasures. It came to her there as a revelation, that the little waif beneath, who was drawing forth from that small instrument strains that might interest an audience of classic taste, was a genius. She never forgot those few moments. She would have gone down, and accompanied him on the organ, but now she could not; for a strong emotion suddenly swept over her young heart, and bursting into tears, she rushed into her room.

When Joker ceased playing, a voice called from the front room, "Come in here, my boy." Joker looked up quickly at Mrs. Daysmore, and at a sign from her, he followed her into the front room. He was surprised to see, in one corner of the room, an elderly gentlemen, seated at a large table, and apparently writing. Many bits of written paper were scattered about the table, and before him lay a large pile of manuscript. Having introduced the old man to Joker as her "Uncle Robbs," Mrs. Daysmore retired, leaving the boy to his first interview with Mr. Mervin Robbs.

Joker was struck with the personal beauty of the old man. As he rose to greet him, he observed that he was tall and erect as a youth. His face was handsome, and bore no indication of dissipation. His

hair, which was worn rather long, was a mass of beautiful light curls, and though becoming gray, Mr. Robbs was apparently fresh and vigorous. But Joker observed with some uneasiness that the old man's brown eyes had a peculiar glitter, and moved in a restless manner.

"You perform on that little instrument very well," he said to Joker. "You are a natural musician."

"I love music. I could play all day long," said Joker, brightly.

"If I am not mistaken, you are a genius," said Mr. Robbs.

"What is that?" asked Joker.

"Aye, that's the question ; what is it?" replied Mr. Robbs. "That's it, my boy. Who can say? How many have tried to define genius, but have failed. You will know in years to come what it is, and yet you may never be able to define it, never. Although you are only a boy, when I heard you play in the other room, I said to myself, That lad is a genius, and because he is only a boy, there lies his great danger to temptation."

"I know what you mean now," said Joker. He had received a very vigorous explanation of that word from Mrs. Blackrock, which he had not forgotten.

"Ah, there now, my boy, there is where it is," said Mr. Robbs. "You think you know temptation. There is your danger again ; for you are mistaken in that. You do not know it. You did not know you were a genius until you were told it, and genius

always puts the unhappy possessor of it in the way of temptation. There the devil will approach him, and his very greatness may lead to his fall. I make a practice of warning every boy and young man I meet, warning them against temptation, and I am especially concerned about them if I find them clever. I hope soon to be able to give advice to all who may be wise enough to take it. You see all those sheets written, lying on the table ? ”

He pointed to the pile of manuscript, and continued : “ My book will be ‘ The Key to all the Temptations of the Devil ? ’ There is not a passage in the Bible that speaks on temptation that I shall not explain before I am done. Oh, how crafty the devil is ! Why, he is beside you, my boy ! ”

Joker turned and looked about the room, but as he was not able to apprehend the invisible, no matter how very real it might be to the other, he did not move, and Mr. Robbs resumed the conversation :

“ I mean, my boy, he is near to everyone, every moment, and he knows the weak points in your nature, and where you may be approached. Oh, I hope my book may clear the way somewhat for poor souls in temptation ! ”

He stopped speaking. Joker was now staring at him almost bewildered ; not so far, however, as not to be able to see that the man was raving on one idea, returning to it again and again. The old man continued to look at the pile of manuscript on the table, and after a few moments he began again to speak.

“ When I was young my friends told me I had a

genius for music, and urged me to devote myself to the study. My choice was letters; but as they discouraged me in that. I had to give way to them and take up music. Perhaps they were right. I studied hard, but in this very line I met my enemy, and fell before him. My friends cannot stop me now. I will write, and I am going to give to the world the key, the great key, that will unlock all these dark troubles. There it is!" and again he pointed to the manuscript.

"Do you play now?" asked Joker, for he wanted to say something. He had hoped that Mr. and Mrs. Daysmore would come into the room, but they had not appeared.

"Come, and let us try a piece together," said the old man. He had a large organ in his room, at which he seated himself, and Joker took up a position behind him.

Mr. Robbs first tried him with the National Anthem, and a few Scottish airs, and Joker followed him very well. Then the old man swept into a splendid march. Joker accompanied him, more and more faintly, and then ceased playing, while the other went magnificently on; and as he entered more and more into the spirit of the music his body swayed to the time, the peculiar light of his eyes changed to a soft glow, and his features lost their restless appearance. Noticing that Joker was not accompanying him, he softly brought the performance to a close, and asked, "Why are you not following me?"

It took Joker some moments to come back to earth, and then he answered in a husky voice, "I am listen-

ing. I do not know that music, but please do not stop; go on."

Mr. Robbs turned again to the organ and poured his spirit into another similar composition, which occupied him about ten minutes. When he turned again to Joker, the boy was softly weeping.

"I feel much better now," said the old man.

"I wonder," replied Joker, "if I shall ever learn such music as that." He looked down at his little mouth-organ as he spoke. It appeared so insignificant to him now.

"I think you gave just as good music to-night," answered Mr. Robbs. "It is not altogether *what* you play, but rather *how* you play and how you put your own spirit into the instrument, making it speak forth what you feel. Simple composition then becomes great. You have the gift. You did that to-night. I know a musician when I hear one play, no matter how small the instrument. You have the soul, my boy, and the time will come when you will be able to do the same on such compositions as I have played and on others much more advanced. I am glad you came in, my boy, for I feel much better myself. Good night!" and he extended his hand to Joker.

Joker was much pleased with the encouraging words he had received. When he came out of the room, Mrs. Daysmore said, "We were listening and we received it all without disturbing you by our presence. Uncle Robbs plays beautifully."

Then they told Joker how much they had enjoyed his musical performances and how pleasant he had

made the evening for them. Would he not come again? Certainly, Joker would come again, but could not say just how soon.

When Joker had gone away Mr. Daysmore said: "Ma, that's no ordinary boy. What a pity he could not get instructions in music. If he could, I believe he would be heard from. I must keep my eye on that boy."

Mr. Daysmore was like a great many others who have resolved to "keep an eye" on some deserving person who needed a little help, and they have done so until the individual passed out of their sight.

VII.

A YOUTHFUL LOVER'S DIFFICULTIES.

If Joker had gone straight home after leaving Mr. Daysmore's, this narrative would have been different in some respects ; but Joker did not. He walked down the road about the distance of a field, then he looked back. The light in Minerva's room was still shining. He returned to the gate ; then again he changed his mind and went toward home, and having gone about the same distance, he turned again to cast one parting glance at the window. Then he mused : Perhaps he should have spoken to "Minnie" as he passed out. Perhaps she had been expecting him to do so. It was not very late ; why not go back and do so yet ? Youthful imagination supplied what was wanting, and on the strength of such hypothetical reasoning, Joker went back again and went in through the gate, stepping along softly. He did not know, however, that two sharp ears within the house were pricked up and caught the indistinct vibrations his light steps made. A low growl came from "Danger," but Mr. Daysmore was asleep down stairs by this time and did not hear. Minerva heard it and suspected something.

Just as Joker came to the rain-water tank, the light in the room above went out.

Now Joker thought there could be no harm in just sounding his mouth-organ softly so that "Minnie" might know he had come back to the window. In order to get as near as possible to the window, he climbed up on the tank by placing one foot against the house and throwing himself sideways and upward. The dog heard all these rattlings and having risen softly, he stood like a lion looking for an enemy. Joker now sounded the mouth-organ softly, and as he did so, there was an explosion of deep sound within, as the Newfoundland uttered an awful roar and sprang over against the door leading into the kitchen; then he rushed to the front door and sprang against it, then stopped to listen. At this point also the window over Joker's head opened softly and a voice without a visible body said in a low tone, "O Joker, run! run! If the dog gets out he'll kill you!"

"I will, Minnie," said Joker, in a whisper; "good night, dear," and he turned to jump down; but as he turned, the tank which had been shaken by him climbing upon it, rolled from its props, pulling the water-pipe away from the wall and roof with a cracking, rattling noise. It rolled down the sloping lawn, striking a tree and knocking off the tap, then rolled on a couple of yards farther, with the water now gushing out as if it were coming from the muzzle of a fire-hose.

Joker had fallen down by the house; but he sprang up and dashed for the gate, clenching his

mouth-organ in his hand. He had to go through the stream of water to get there, and instead of going out to the gate at the road he sprang over the fence at the other side of the lane, and ran for the road, taking a diagonal cut across the field.

The sounds within the house were now terrific, much resembling those that might come from a lion's cage when two fierce beasts fight. Mr. Daysmore was aroused, and half dazed, got up to find out what the noise was all about. As he went to the door with bare feet, and only partly dressed, "Danger" struggled hard with him to get out, and finally succeeded; but fortunately for Joker, he ran around the opposite end of the house and so missed the sound of his retreating footsteps. Then, finding no one at the end where the board walk was, he came with great leaps around the other end from which the tank had rolled, and in the darkness bounded against Mr. Daysmore, sending him sprawling far into the pool of water which had flowed from the broken tap. Here the dog caught the scent, but as Joker's retreat was covered by the flow of water he lost it again, and without going into the lane he ran off toward the road, barking furiously.

Mr. Daysmore went in again and hastily drew on some more clothing. Coming out, he looked up at the place where his gun usually hung. It was not there, and he remembered now where it was. Just at this moment there was a loud report of a gun far down in his field near the road. "There's someone at my melons," he said, and ran out.

Joker had dashed on through the field, making for a tree which he knew stood near the fence, into which he was going to climb, and remain quiet until the dog went in again ; but suddenly, as he neared the tree, his toe caught a wire, and he plunged headlong into the wet, cultivated soil. As he went down there was a flash of fire from the tree, accompanied by the report of a gun.

“ I'm shot,” groaned Joker, as he lay for a moment partly stunned by the loud report. “ No, I'm not, either,” he said again, as he recovered and scrambled to his feet. Then he struck down deeper into the field, away from the road ; for he heard the dog coming down the road with a terrible noise, having been attracted by the report of the gun.

Joker never doubted that someone in the tree had shot at him. He did not know enough of life to be superstitious ; but to-night his mind had been dwelling on some supernatural things. Once the thought occurred to him that it might be that individual about whose temptations Mr. Robbs had spoken and written so much, who was laying a snare for him. What if it were ?

He was soon across the field, and running along the fence, saw another tree against the sky, which he made for, and climbing from the fence was soon lost in its branches. He was none too quick, for the dog was soon under the tree, and had located him. To call his master's attention, he began a furious assault of barking.

It occurred to Joker that he might either scare the

dog away or coax him into an acquaintance, if he were to take out the mouth-organ and play a little, which he did ; but this only had the effect of driving the dog into a wild frenzy.

Mr. Daysmore had followed the dog, and as he drew near to the tree he heard the low strains of the mouth-organ. At once the suspicion flashed upon him that Joker was the thief who had been in his melon patch, and he had been discovered by having tripped over the wire, which was attached to the gun.

“ Is that you, Joker ? ” he called out.

“ Yes, I’m in the tree ; don’t shoot,” replied Joker.

“ Well, come down ; I want to talk with you.”

“ Not while that dog’s there.”

“ I will not let him touch you,” said the other ; and thus assured, Joker began to descend the tree. The dog, apparently satisfied that this one piece of detective work was complete, returned to the melon patch in search of another.

“ Were you stealing my melons ? ” asked Mr. Daysmore.

“ What melons ? ” asked Joker ; “ I know nothing about melons.”

“ You were in my melon patch, and the gun scared you away,” said Mr. Daysmore. “ Now, I want to know what you were there for ? ”

“ It wasn’t melons I was after, it was Minerva,” said Joker, and then frankly told how he had returned to the window “ to get a look at Minerva and play her a little toon,” and how the barrel rolled over, and he ran away for fear of the dog.

"Why did you come back?" asked Mr. Daysmore.

"Well, sir, you told me to call again, and I thought I was welcome to do so, and have a look at 'Minnie.'"

This was too much for Mr. Daysmore's risibilities, and he said to himself, laughing, "Well, I'll be hanged!" Then aloud, "I must take you home to Jerry's, as you are too small a boy to be out around the fields at this hour, so come along;" and taking him by the hand he walked Joker home to Jerry's.

While Joker had been passing through water and through fire for Minerva's sake, Jerry Blackrock and his wife had been conversing. He had been quiet most of the evening until about nine o'clock, when his wife, looking up from some fancy work, said, "You're very quiet, Jerry; a penny for your thoughts."

"You can have them, Barbara, at your own price, for I want someone to have them besides myself." This was said in such a sad tone that she again quickly asked, "What is the matter with you?"

"Oh, you know," he replied; "it is the old thing, Barbara, and I think it will be there till I go and give it all away to the right one. I am going around like a man hunted for his life, and I am afraid of everyone I see, for fear they accuse me. Everyone seems to stare at me as though they knew some fearful thing against me. Ever since I saw Longfellow that day, I have been troubled. I say, Barbara, would it not be better for us to go and confess everything, and let him do as he likes? I think if we threw ourselves on his mercy he would not be too hard on us. It has

come to this: I must do something, for I can't go on this way much longer. What do you say, Barbara?"

He spoke with a feeling of desperation; but she answered lightly, "You told me, Jerry, you had seen his spirit. I don't think you have much to fear from a disembodied ghost."

"Well," replied Jerry, "he came before me so sudden that day, I thought it was a spirit, and I sometimes think so yet; but it's him, anyway, and spirit or man I am for telling him all, and asking his forgiveness. If I had to do it all over again, Barbara, I would not do it, and I am sorry for the others, for now that he has turned up they are sure to hear of it sometime soon."

"How?" asked his wife evasively.

"I don't know, but you'll see," he replied. "But what do you say, Barbara, to what I propose?"

"You may do just as you please, but I hold the property in my name, and I mean to keep it. Do you think that after twenty years of hard labor, I am going to spend my old age in some poor refuge? You know, Jerry, you put it in my name to keep it safe, and I am not going to give it up now."

"But I am sure," went on her husband, "that Longfellow would let us have most of it, good wages at any rate; and if we only got one-half, would it not be better than to live as I am living now? For I feel so guilty I don't care to go on the road, or anywhere that I am likely to meet anyone. I do not even care to be with Joker, for I feel that there is such a difference between his innocent life and all

I have gone through. I wish he was away from us."

"Well, we can soon settle that," said his wife; "but it will not be so easy to get rid of that ghost."

"No fear of the ghost if we only go to him and make a clean breast of things," and even as he was speaking there came a loud rap at the back door. Jerry turned pale, and his wife certainly looked puzzled. "You go," she said to him.

"No; you go," said Jerry in a husky voice. So with some trepidation she opened the door, and Joker was ushered into the room by Mr. Daysmore.

In the excitement of the capture, Mr. Daysmore had forgotten his good resolution to "keep an eye" on Joker, for the latter's welfare. He was a man who found great delight in small triumphs. There was really no need that he should enter Jerry's house, but he must needs proclaim the success of his plan in arranging the wire and the gun to guard his melons. He explained to Mrs. Blackrock that he suspected Joker of theft, but added, "I will be certain in the morning, when I count my melons, for I know how many there were."

"It's just like what he would be doing," said Mrs. Blackrock.

"Did I ever steal anything from your house?" asked the boy in a tone that surprised both her and Mr. Daysmore.

"I do not know of anything," she replied.

"Then why do you say it would be like me to be stealing melons? I could not eat his melons, and you know that too," said Joker.

As he said this, he put his hand upon a large glass tumbler that stood on the sideboard, and Mrs. Blackrock, seeing the movement, stepped back. At that moment Joker remembered the bright figure that had kissed him in his dream, and he put down the heavy glass again.

"Well, get ready for bed," said Mrs. Blackrock. "I will," replied Joker; "but before I go, I want to tell you I am as honest as you are, and to-morrow I will go away from here, for I will not stay in a house where anyone says I steal, when I do not," and the little fellow broke down.

"Joker has never stolen anything in our home," said Jerry, coming out and speaking excitedly to Mr. Daysmore. "I think you will find your melons all right in the morning, if no one else visits them." He turned and went away, nervously twitching his arms and muttering something.

Matters had taken a more serious turn than Mr. Daysmore had expected. When Minerva learned of the affair the next morning she was flaming with indignation. She went with her father to the melon patch, and on counting the melons the boy's innocence was demonstrated.

Mr. Daysmore went to Mrs. Blackrock on the special mission of clearing Joker of any suspicion of theft, early the next forenoon, but Joker was not there to be reassured of his confidence and friendship.

At an early hour that morning he had left Mrs. Blackrock's house, taking a small bundle of books and clothes tied up in a paper. Mrs. Blackrock was

at last free from her latest source of annoyance; but though she closed up his room, and tried to take his departure calmly, over and over again that day the boy's words came back to her: "I am as honest as you are." It was as though a curtain were drawn aside, and a troop of memories came rushing forward to accuse her. Instinctively she put out her hand to turn away their ugly faces, and draw the curtain again; but through the veil came their hateful voices, "He is more honest than you! He is! He is!"

VIII.

BARBERRY COTTAGE.

JOKER had directed his steps toward the "Old Orchard." Arthur was his friend, and would help him to find another place, or otherwise advise him what to do. So when Arthur came out at an early hour to walk in the lane, as was his custom, he found Joker on one of the seats at the back of the house, with his little bundle beside him.

"Why, Joker, what's up?" asked Arthur, as he espied the little bundle.

"I have left Jerry's," replied Joker. Then he proceeded to relate the whole story of the preceding night. Arthur laughed heartily when Joker came to the incident of the gun and the dog, and finally Joker was laughing, too; but his lips quivered when he came to the recital of what occurred in the house with Mrs. Blackrock.

"If it had not been for something, I would have smashed her with the tumbler," he said.

"I am glad you did not," replied Arthur.

"So am I, now," said Joker; "but I was angry. She knew I never took anything of hers, and Jerry came out and said so, too. I am as honest as she is,

if I am only a little 'Home' boy, and I told her so, too ;" and Joker gave way to tears.

Recovering, he continued : " I am sorry to go away from the writing class, for I needed that, and I think I am getting on well. I like that old man, Longfellow, for I am pretty sure he put some good fish in my pail one day we were out, and Mrs. Blackrock got them, too."

Arthur took Joker in for breakfast, and for the first time Mrs. Medford and he met.

" How are you, Joker ?" she said, with a bright smile, that seemed to scatter sunshine all about the room. Her face presented such a contrast to the face that had scowled on him last night !

Kate had met him before, as they sat near each other in the writing class. As breakfast proceeded he told Kate and her mother the story of his adventure the previous night, and he was pleased to see how much they enjoyed it. Kate especially laughed until she found it necessary to apply a handkerchief to her eyes. It was not often they had so much real mirth at the breakfast table.

After breakfast came the morning devotions, and they read in Matthew xxv. Kate's voice broke a little as she read verse thirty-five, and she was glad when Arthur took up the next verse. The prayer that followed was expressive, as Mrs. Medford, in simple language, presented the case of each and all to the Father in heaven. " And this little boy—Father, bless and guide him ; for he is Thy child, one of Thy little ones. May he learn of Thee and be

willing to follow where Thou leadest, and may a door be opened for him to enter, where he may find kind friends."

Oh, how that prayer, with the special reference to himself, sank into Joker's heart! It became one of the memories that never left him.

They arose, and Kate went out without looking at anyone. Arthur also went out the back door. Mrs. Medford and the boy were left alone, and as he looked at her now he thought she was so much like the bright figure that came to him in his dream.

During the forenoon Kate said to her mother, "Ma, couldn't we keep Joker, at least for a while, until he may find a place?"

"My dear, that is just the thought I have had in mind," replied her mother. "If Arthur returns to study, he would be useful in many ways, and I imagine I would like the little fellow."

"I do not know who could help but like him," replied Kate; "he is so full of fun, and so innocent about it all, too."

When Arthur was consulted he was quite willing that Joker should be taken in. He wrote to the "Home" that day, and succeeded in getting Joker transferred to Mrs. Medford.

Joker was delighted to remain with them; he would not have to give up the writing class. The morning prayer had thus been answered. A door had opened for the little homeless boy, and he had found kind friends.

The second day after Joker was lodged in "The Old

Orchard," Miss Trillman carried away Marion and Kate for an afternoon at Barberry Cottage. Kate had been there many times before, but this was Marion's first visit. Accordingly, the visit made different impressions upon the two young ladies.

The house was an oblong red brick, both large and high for a cottage. The kitchen was of the same material, but was comparatively small. The windows were the large, old-fashioned twelve-pane style. The front door was made of solid oak, which had once been oiled, but was now faded to a grayish brown. It was without a porch, and beneath it there was only the merest attempt at a platform. In front of the house a grassy lawn extended to the road, and in which were a few irregular evergreens. To the north, extending from the road, past the house and back to the orchard, was a dense hedge of barberry, from which the cottage had been named. In the fall season, and on into the winter, this hedge was all aglow like a flaming bush with the red berries that hung in rich clusters from every twig and stalk. It served as a refreshment stand for flocks of migrating birds in autumn, and in winter the sparrow and snow-bird found a feeding ground here.

Miss Trillman carried her young visitors along the gravelled drive that lay between the hedge and the cottage, and having ushered them into the house, went off to attend to "Charlie," her large bay driver.

How they might be entertained, or how they were to put in the afternoon, Marion had no idea, but she was sure that in Miss Trillman's company there

would be no lack of conversation, and an abundance of music if desired. The arrangement of Miss Trillman's house was on much the same principle as the arrangement of her apparel and her head-dress. There was a place for everything, it was true, but whether it was in harmonious relations with its environment was another thing. About the first thing Marion's eyes fell on in the hall was a large steel engraving of Dickens. In the room called the parlor were many curios indeed. In the centre of the room was a rather large but old-fashioned table, that was supported on carved, wide-spreading feet, and which carried all manner of strange things, the collections of a lifetime. Here was a silver watch bearing the name of "Chas. Dickens;" an old quill pen, which had been used by the same. Here was a strangely shaped shell from Ceylon; there, a flake of skeleton cactus from Mexico; yonder, a few bits of different ores from California. But mementos of Dickens predominated, for Miss Trillman had purchased so many of these in different places that at length even she had begun to suspect that some had never been in the author's possession. A bust of him stood on the mantel; a small oil painting presented him at twenty-five, when he was coming into distinction; a small penknife, supposed to have been his, and an autograph letter to a friend in New York. His works, in both cloth and full morocco, occupied conspicuous places on neatly arranged shelves. Indeed, the room was a very shrine to Dickens, and the mistress of the house evidently a devoted worshipper.

Marion surveyed all these things with a degree of amazement that amused Kate, and then remarked :

“ She appears to have a passion for Dickens.”

“ I think Miss Trillman reads very little else,” answered Kate. “ She can read his works the year round, and never appears to tire of them. You may hear from herself how often she has read them. She appears to find in his works a parallel to everything she meets with. If spirits ever do come back, and if his should ever come here, I think it ought to be assured of one devotee.”

“ Oh, Kate, don’t talk about his spirit coming back,” pleaded Marion. “ So many things in one room to remind you of a dead person are almost as bad as a ghost. I almost feel like running away.”

Miss Trillman came in as they were chatting, and Marion soon found more to take up her attention.

“ So you now have that boy, Joker, in your house, Kate,” began Miss Trillman. “ I am so glad he found such a good home. I would have taken him myself had I known he was going to leave the other family. What do you call them—Blackrocks? Blackhearts would be a better name for them, I think. How did you manage to get him, Kate ?”

Kate then told her all about Joker coming to their home, not omitting the amusing story of the night episode, and as neither Marion or Miss Trillman had heard it, they laughed heartily at Kate’s graphic description as given by the boy himself.

“ Bless the little fellow,” said Miss Trillman, wiping away a tear that might have originated in either

mirth or deep sympathy ; "he is cast on a hard world. I often wish I had the means to support a home for such little waifs. So many of them get into homes where they are looked upon as mere creatures of burden. They get no sympathy and no instruction, and yet they are expected to do everything perfectly correct. I wonder how would Canadian children do under such circumstances ? Would they be much better ? In some homes they are beaten worse than cattle. They are called out of bed at four o'clock in the morning, and put to work that requires the strength of adults ; then, if they cannot do it, they are beaten. I was in a certain home, not many days ago, where the husband spoke of them as 'English brats that ought to be knocked on the head.' I tell you, girls, I could not bear such heartless language, and I expressed my mind freely to him. I lost two pupils on account of what I said, but I do not care to be associated with a home where they have no kind feelings toward such orphan children.

"Miss Trillman," said Kate, "I may tell you that you are going to have Joker for a pupil, if you will undertake his instruction."

"I shall be delighted to have him," said Miss Trillman, "and if you people are agreeable to it, his instruction shall be free." She spoke with energy, and there was deep sympathy in her voice, when she referred to the homeless children. Marion's heart warmed toward this peculiar woman, and she wondered what life-history lay back of her words. Thinking to change the conversation, Marion said :

"You are a great admirer of Dickens, I imagine, Miss Trillman, from what I see here."

"I am, indeed," replied the other; "I read his books over and over again. I have read them eight times in all."

"Do you not tire of reading them over and over so many times?" asked Marion.

"Oh, dear no," replied Miss Trillman. "You always find something new in Dickens. Then, one is always seeing more of life, and new things are happening all the time, and it recalls something I have met in his works. Why, when Kate was speaking of Joker, it reminded me so much of little Oliver Twist, or Sloppy, or little David Copperfield looking for a home. Oh, dear girl, I never grow tired of him. Have you read Dickens?"

Marion mentioned a few of his books she had read, and intimated that Miss Trillman's interest in the great novelist would prompt a further study of his works. Then she asked:

"Do you not think, Miss Trillman, that many passages of his works might have been given a higher moral tone? Some have complained that at times he is 'coarse.' Then there are passages where profane words are repeated, and festive scenes are presented that are boisterous almost to the point of rowdyism. He never raised his voice against intemperance, and he is said even to have ridiculed abstinence."

Marion was unconsciously touching on very tender points with Miss Trillman. To the latter this meant the degradation of her literary idol, and she replied

with a good deal of warmth, "Those who find fault with Dickens do so because they are ignorant and incapable of appreciating his greatness. A novelist must portray faithfully the society of the particular time about which he is writing. Read Dickens, and you see English society as it was in his day. You see, too, how he tried to expose and drive out the wrongs that were being perpetrated against innocence and childhood. In those things you mention it is not Dickens who speaks, but the character he is describing. Where do you find so much sympathy for the poor? Who has done so much to drag vice into light? Where has his power of description been excelled? Who presents to you so much of human nature?"

During this animated defence she had risen, and she began to show the young ladies the several mementos of the great author. "You know," she continued, "people who do not marry must still have choices and companionship. I have Dickens; dear, dear, Dickens!"

"I am surprised," said Marion to her, "that so well-informed a woman as you should not have had many offers of marriage!"

"My dear girl!" replied Miss Trillman, "I have rejected far more offers of marriage than you will ever receive. Now, tell me honestly, as I am sure you will, have you ever had an offer of marriage?"

Marion was blushing deeply now. Her words had not conveyed to Miss Trillman the real thought in her mind. It was some compensation to the latter to tell her the truth, so she replied:

"No; I have not had an offer of marriage. You would scarcely expect one so young as I am to be sought after in that way."

"Dear heart," said Miss Trillman, "before I was your age I had declined to marry at least four times, and all of the young men were brilliant and wealthy. When I was a girl it was strange, indeed, if a season went by without receiving a proposal from one or more."

"But you see, Miss Trillman," put in Marion, anxious now to change the conversation, "I am only a minister's daughter and have not had all those possible opportunities which your 'season' gave you."

At this point Miss Trillman caught sight of the figure of an elderly man coming up the gravel drive. She sprang up, and a little color came to her face as she said: "There comes Mr. Robbs, the gentleman I have engaged to barrel my fruit. I must give him directions about it, so please excuse me."

Kate had been quietly leaving most of the conversation to Marion. She now said with a real hearty laugh "Well, Marion?"

"Well, Kate," replied Marion, smiling herself. "You had the advantage of me by having been here before. Kate, did you ever hear such boasting from an old maid about the proposals of marriage she has declined? More before she was my age than I shall ever have! A great deal she knows about how many I may have. Truly Kate, I see you may depend on an old maid when it comes to boasting about matri-

mony. It will be a wonder if she has not something to say about this old man when she returns."

"What do you mean?" asked Kate, controlling herself as much as she could.

"Why, you remember in your home that evening, she intimated that people were circulating false reports about her. Pa told me afterwards that it was reported that she and this Mr. Robbs were courting. This looks like it, I declare! Did you see the color rise to her face as she went out? I did."

"Nonsense, Marion!" said Kate. "I do not believe a word of it. Most people think the old man is not right in his mind. He has made attempts on his life twice, so the Daysmores say, and he has threatened to suicide yet. He spends most of his time writing a book, which he has asked Dr. Sam to review, but Dr. Sam considers it the freak of a madman. About two years ago he gave his last two hundred dollars to the Manson Undertaking Co. so that he might be certain of a decent burial, but he has since been drawing it out in small sums, till now there is not enough left to buy a shroud with. Why, Marion, Miss Trillman would never marry that man."

"Well, we shall see, Kate," said Marion doubtfully. "I have my own opinions about an old maid who boasts as much about her suitors as she did to-day, and with so little occasion for it."

A few moments of silence followed, moments in which Kate had to practise great self-restraint.

Then Marion asked, "How long has she been in this place? Who is she, or where did she come from, Kate?"

"She has been here about eight years," replied Kate, "and during that time she has taught a large class. She is a good instructor. As you see, she is strong and can stand any amount of hard work, so that she makes large pay. She is simply Miss Trillman; that is all I can say. Where she came from I do not know, but I believe she is rich and in the past has moved in good society."

"It appears to take her a good while to give directions to that old man," said Marion. "I shall tell you that I believe the report he heard is true."

Kate only smiled at these surmisings.

After a time Miss Trillman returned, and accounted for her delay by stating that she had been giving "Charlie" his feed. "Mr. Robbs wanted to look after him," she went on, "but I don't allow gentlemen about my horse."

Inwardly Marion repeated, "'Gentlemen!' If that is not enough!"

Then Miss Trillman prepared tea, and Marion observed that the evening meal had all the characteristics of the parlor, or the millinery of her hostess. However, it passed pleasantly.

After tea Miss Trillman entertained the young ladies at the piano, where she was truly a queen upon her throne. Miss Trillman knew one thing well. She was a musician of a high order. However weak she might be in other things, in this she was strong. Marion discerned the touch of the true artist in the first few notes she struck. The instrument appeared to be animate with the spirit of the musician, and

responded to those varying psychic conditions through which she was passing. Half an hour went by, and seemed but a few minutes to the young ladies. Faintly and more faintly the music came, then ceased, like as the music from an outgoing vessel dies away in the distance. Miss Trillman sat with hands folded, looking over the piano at some far-off scene, apparently unconscious of her surroundings.

Kate was the first to break the spell. She had observed Mr. Robbs standing perfectly still under a tree near the cottage, his uncovered head bowed low.

“What is Mr. Robbs doing?” she asked.

“He is listening to the music,” replied Miss Trillman. But she made no further remark. Both Kate and Marion observed that the voice in which she spoke was subdued and mellow. It was like the voice of a different woman.

Book III.

F R U I T S.

I.

TWO PARTIES.

THE month of writing lessons was drawing toward a close. There remained a week. The class had been a success, and the evenings had passed pleasantly. Neil McNair had been much better pleased with this affair than the former, for Jack had been an interested student.

"I dinna doot but Jeck may mak' somethin' o' himsel', if he juist follows this up a bit," he had remarked to Longfellow one day when they met at the post-office. The latter had greeted him cordially, and Neil, in turn, had taken so careful a look at him now in civilian clothes that he was convinced that the "writing master" was in very truth the stranger he had entertained at dinner, and whom he had reviled to his face. Neil admitted his mistake, accounting for it theologically, since no one could live without committing sin. The manifest change

in Jack added very much to Neil's mental tranquility, and promoted good feelings toward Longfellow. Jack was drawing away more and more from association with Dave Stenson.

At the beginning of the third week of the writing lessons Longfellow announced that on the closing night he would receive again from each member a specimen of his or her best writing. He would ask the class to appoint two judges, who would make a comparison of these with the former specimens, and decide which two of all had made the greatest improvement during the lessons. A prize of a ring would be given to the young lady, and a gold pen to the boy or young man, who should merit the distinction. This new thing attracted the attention of the entire neighborhood. The last meeting of the class was to be open to the public, with the exception of a half hour, in which each member would prepare his or her specimen of writing. The class chose Rev. Mr. Stafford and Mr. Minnes, a teacher from a neighboring school, as judges.

While the writing lessons were in progress, Dr. Sam had spoken to most of the young people in attendance about organizing a literary society and debating club to be carried on during the winter months, and the suggestion met with so much approval that by the time the writing class came to a close the literary society was about organized, nearly the entire class consenting to unite. We shall follow the work of this club later.

The day following the announcement concerning the prizes, Dr. Sam received two dainty notes at the

post office. One was from the Stafford family requesting the pleasure of his company at the parsonage on Friday evening, for tea. The other note read as follows :

OLD ORCHARD, Tues. Ev'g.

MR. SAMUEL MARTIN :

Dear Friend,—

I have learned that you are expected at the parsonage, to spend Friday evening. Arthur and I are also to be there ; but I shall spend the afternoon with Mrs. Stenson at a quilting bee. May I request you do me the favor of driving there for me in the evening, at half-past five ; not one minute before, nor one minute later, but five-thirty exactly, and you will oblige,

Yours very truly,

KATE MEDFORD.

After Dr. Sam had replied in the affirmative to both of the notes, he had pleasant thoughts about the coming visit to the parsonage.

Thursday evening came, and with it the much-looked-for and much-talked-of paring-bee at the Blackrock home. By previous arrangement the writing class was shortened to half an hour, that all invited, or all who supposed they were invited, might go. The moon was in "first quarter," and the rain had made a plentiful supply of mud, which caused Mrs. Blackrock, as she contemplated the evening, some anxiety about her carpets and her house in general. Very few were yet aware that Joker had left the Blackrock home, for he had continued at school, saying nothing about the change. Minerva knew all about it, and she admired Joker

more than ever for the "spunk" he had shown in representing a false accusation. [She firmly resolved to "cut" Mrs. Blackrock, and be absent from the bee, for she never doubted that her invitation was genuine. Minerva was quite sure Mrs. Blackrock would feel deeply mortified at the absence of such a close neighbor.

Some of the young people invited by Mrs. Blackrock were not members of the writing class, and these came in about eight o'clock. The young ladies were taken upstairs to lay off their wraps, while the young men were requested to put their coats, etc., in the wide hall. Shortly after they were seated another ring of the bell announced the arrival of more guests, and Jerry, going to the door this time, saw a boy. "Come in," said Jerry, and the boy stepped in; then, tramping on his heels, came a dozen girls and boys, each of the boys carrying a paring machine.

"Good-night, Jerry," or "Good-night, Mr. Blackrock," they almost shouted, as with delight, they looked around the spacious rooms ablaze with lights, and which few of them ever had been permitted to enter before. Hearing the stamping and clatter, with the accompanying loud talk, Mrs. Blackrock came out. "Good-night, Mrs. Blackrock," came in a chorus to greet her. "Hope you have lots of apples ready."

"Oh, are you wanting some?" she asked, not understanding all this jubilant greeting.

"Yes, of course; that's what we came for; see our machines?" and up went half a dozen of those tiny pieces of mechanism.

"I think, boys," went on Mrs. Blackrock, "there is some mistake."

"Why, isn't this the night of your paring bee?" asked two or three.

"It is," replied Mrs. Blackrock, becoming annoyed.

"Well, that's what we came for. Where are your apples, and we'll go at them right away?"

At this point Mrs. Blackrock saw that the boys had innocently come to the bee, whether invited or not she could not tell; and here was an opening to pass the matter over, and put them to work. But she was not going to have her house "filled up with a lot of bold, impudent youngsters who ought to be at home in bed."

"Who asked you to come?" she inquired, now quite angry, as the boys plainly saw; so they replied, "Joker asked us."

"Just what I thought," blazed out the lady, although she had not thought of Joker till they mentioned his name. "He had no authority to ask you," she went on; "I cannot be responsible for what he has done, and you must go home again, every one that Joker asked."

The boys stared at one another, and one or two toyed with their machines. Finally, one asked, "Where is Joker?"

"Not here," was the reply; and more blank staring with the boys.

"And can't we stay?" asked Ben Wiley, coming forward.

"No, you can't stay; didn't you hear what I said?" replied the now infuriated hostess.

And the girls who had come on Joker's invitation! —the poor girls! Some of them had taken off a hat, or a ruff, or a cape; and now they looked around at one another, while deep crimson crept up over their cheeks, and one or two began to cry. At this point Jerry came forward and said in a low tone, "I think, Barbara, they had better stay, for you see they were invited, and we can find room for them all. Let them stay, and say no more about it."

"Jeremiah Blackrock!" cried his frenzied wife, "do I not know best how many we can find room for? Am I going to allow that impudent thief, Joker, to send who he likes to my home, and—"

"He isn't a thief, ma'am," cried out Ben Wiley, standing up for his absent seat-fellow, and snatching up his hat he dashed out, as Mrs. Blackrock turned her angry eyes to look where the voice came from. Ben sprang down the steps uttering a wild whoop, and out after him came the other boys, while the girls were making ready to leave.

"What's up with her, anyway?" asked Ben.

"I don't know," replied one.

"No more than is always up," said another.

"I guess she is angry at Joker," said a third, "and that's what's up. I won't stay, anyway." Here the girls came out, and just then the remainder of the invited and the uninvited guests were seen coming in at the gate.

A remnant of those whom Joker had asked had waited about the schoolyard until the others came out, and these also met some more at the store, who joined

them, while some not very desirable young men followed the company down. The boys and girls waited outside until the second contingent came up, followed by the nondescript.

"Tickets," cried out Ben, as they drew near, "no admission here except by ticket."

"How's that?" asked one of the invited-by-letter.

"We were put out," said Ben, "because we came on Joker's invitation. Mrs. Blackrock says he had no business to invite us."

The crowd now halted, and forming into a circle looked much like a council of war. Some of those who had been sent away were from the same families as some who had received written invitations, and who were either within or were now in the circle outside, and as they saw the girls weeping at their repulse they became indignant.

"Suppose we go in and ask her to take in everybody," said one; "there has been some mistake."

"But she won't let us in again," said one girl sobbing; "she's raving mad already. It nearly frightened me to look at her."

"Well, then," said the mover, "if she won't let all in, we can all leave, and call the bee off."

This was agreed to, and in went those who could be admitted by "ticket."

We are not going to defend what was done that evening either within or without the home of the Blackrocks. We only record faithfully the events of the evening as they happened, and they will have to be accepted as partial expressions of a human nature

found in all boys and girls, and also in most men and women.

As they went up the steps Kate said to Arthur and Dr. Sam, "Do try to persuade her to let them all come in, and have no more trouble;" but even as they opened the door loud words reached them. Lily Munroe was one of the girls whom Joker invited, and having been ordered to leave with the others, had gone out. Mary, her elder sister, and Angus, a brother, who did not attend the writing school, were among the first to come. Mary now came out to plead for Lily:

"Do let her remain, Mrs. Blackrock; ma will take it so hard if Lily goes home in this way, and you know —."

But Mrs. Blackrock cut her short: "Your ma ought to have known that when I asked two from her family that was enough. No well-bred person would think of taking another invitation from a boy."

She was talking wildly now. Mary only said, "Oh, Mrs. Blackrock," and with a beautiful handkerchief to her eyes, went upstairs to the room where she had left her wraps. Angus, who was of a nervous disposition, seeing Mary leave in this way, became excited, and when excited he stammered a good deal. Going over to Mrs. Blackrock, he asked, with many severe facial contortions, "W—wh—wh—what's the matter, M—M—Mrs. Blackrock, with M—M—Mary? Has sh—sh—she to go home t—t—too?"

"If she likes, she can; I won't force anyone to stay in my house," replied the hostess.

By this time Jerry's head was whirling with the confusion and his wife's ill-humor. He saw Angus talking with her and making severe gesticulations in the effort to express his thoughts, and he supposed Angus was saying something angry to his wife, which he could not allow. Going over, he stepped between the supposed contestants and rudely thrust Angus back. Hot words followed, and it was these Arthur and Dr. Sam heard as they entered the door. The young ladies present became alarmed, thinking Jerry and Angus were going to quarrel, and when someone said, "Goodness! let us leave this place; I'm frightened!" it was the signal for flight. They ran upstairs, and in the scramble for wraps millinery changed ownership, and not a few got the wrong capes and jackets. Some of them fled down the back stairway and out the kitchen door. Arthur and Dr. Sam could do nothing, for there was a blockade in the large hall and on the stairs—some struggling, with the help of the banister, to get up, and some pressing their way down. In the midst of it all Mrs. Blackrock swooned away. When consciousness returned she became hysterical. Kate tried to quiet her perturbed mind and spirit, but in vain. Her weeping became a cry, and her cry passed into screams. Kate was glad when Jerry, at the end of half an hour, requested all the young people kindly to go away that Mrs. Blackrock might have repose.

The boys who had been ejected from the house had not remained inactive. To some extent they had employed their paring machines, for Jerry was

astonished the next morning to see the wire clothes-line filled from end to end with pared apples. A large letch had received a bushel or more of the same. When he went to pump water, it came dashing out at the top, as the spout was filled with apples.

The afternoon of the day following the paring bee, Mrs. Stenson's quilting bee took place. In this manner had Mrs. Stenson begun to work out her plan to procure a wife for her son. She considered it a most fortunate circumstance that Kate had to leave at five-thirty to go to Mr. Stafford's. "We will see that you get there all right," she had said to Kate, and the latter had replied, "Oh, thank you."

"Now, Heddie," she said to her son, in private, "I've found you the chance; but it's for you to make the best of it."

"You don't mean that I am to propose to Kate while driving her up there?" asked Hedley.

"No, no, you silly," said Mrs. Stenson. "But you can ask the privilege of driving her home at whatever hour she may appoint, and make this the beginning of a series of calls."

In Cyprus a rich, valuable species of myrrh is cultivated, a resinous exudation from a low shrub of the *Cistinal* order. The gum is sometimes collected from the beards of goats that are allowed to wander through the plantations, or at times men wearing leathern breeches go through the ladanum thickets, and the resin adheres to this upper garment, from which it is scraped and so collected.

There are persons who put on an outer garment of

sanctity in the way of religious profession and then move among the shrubbery in Christ's garden. They absorb sacred odors and afterwards come forth bearing these upon their garments. They pass for Christians. It is possible that by these sacred odors they persuade themselves that they are Christians. Nevertheless it is an external acquisition, and this outer garment may very easily be laid aside. Moreover, this condition of things, moral or spiritual, cannot always continue. A point will be reached where attrition with sacred things will become ineffective. Even Cyrenian leather will wear out. The odor of moral putrefaction beneath can no longer be counteracted.

Kate Medford had, times without number, heard Mrs. Stenson pray that the Master might show her "just what to do." As often in public testimony had she expressed the desire that she might "know just what to do." Yet the order of her life remained about the same, and no divine communication appeared to have reached her on the matter. Kate had therefore formed a little resolution that for once Mrs. Stenson would know what to do.

Twelve young ladies had been invited, but as five of them had found their plans deranged by the mischances of millinery the night before, only Kate and six others were present to make the unmerciful attack upon the quilt with needles. At times Mrs. Stenson observed muffled conversation and suppressed giggling, when someone made a reference to the previous night.

"I think some of you must have an amusing secret," said Mrs. Stenson. "Let us all know and we shall all enjoy it."

"We will," said one, "if you will tell us all the secrets about this quilt. Who is going to have it?"

"Very likely whoever has Hedley, for, of course, he will get everything we have," and she looked lovingly in Kate's direction.

"That's encouraging for you, Mary," said Kate, addressing Mary Munroe.

"I think it ought to be more encouraging for you, Kate," said Mary. "You would grace these rooms much better than I."

In spite of herself, Kate blushed. The girls laughed at her, and Mrs. Stenson was pleased.

The time passed as it generally does on such occasions. Kate received marked attention from Mrs. Stenson, and some of the girls imagined they had found out a secret; and when they hinted this to Kate, she laughed more merrily, thereby adding to the strength of their convictions.

Four o'clock came, and the scholars rushed home. As they separated at the corner, some of the boys called to Joker to ask whether there were to be another paring bee at Mrs. Medford's. "For if there is, be sure to give us an invitation, and we'll all go." These sounds reached several pretty pairs of ears up in the hall, and set the girls giggling again. Then Dr. Sam passed home on his wheel, moving swiftly. "He is in a hurry to-night—never looked up. I wonder if he is going to another paring bee to-night?"

and this surmise from one of the girls caused more laughter.

“Say, girls,” said Mrs. Stenson, “there must be something funny about that paring bee you were all at last night. I think it’s real mean for you not to tell me; but I’ll find it out. Mr. Fitzhugh will let me know.” A “look” passed around the young ladies.

“Is he going to be here to-night?” asked Mary Munroe.

“Yes,” replied the other; “he will take tea with us to-night. I know you will be interested in that.” This was said to offset Kate’s remark about Mary and Hedley.

Then five o’clock came; then twenty minutes after five. “You wanted to leave at five-thirty, did you not, Kate?” asked Mrs. Stenson.

“If you please,” answered Kate. Mrs. Stenson excused herself a moment to look for Hedley, but he was already gone out to prepare “Kite” for the drive. Hedley was splendidly dressed, and aromatic with a peculiar combination of cigars and perfume. Twenty nine minutes after five, and looking out of the hall window Kate saw Dr. Sam driving up. “I must get ready, girls, so please excuse me. Good-bye!” and she was gone, followed by Mrs. Stenson. Dr. Sam drove up opposite the hall door, and Steve, who had been there about half an hour, noticed him.

“Hello, Doctor,” he called, and walking over shook hands with him. “That’s a nice pony you have, Sam,” continued Steve, patting the animal on the neck.

Dr. Sam was about to make some reply when Hedley drove up "Kite." Hedley appeared a little surprised to see him, but there was no time for question or explanation, for just then a girl's voice said, "Good-bye, Mrs. Stenson," and a vision of beauty bounded past Steve and into Dr. Sam's vehicle. She snatched the lines from his hand, and taking the whip, whirled the pony around and was away in a moment.

We will not transcribe the exact words that came from Steve's lips now, but we may say the cheer he gave rang down the road after Kate and Dr. Sam, and they heard him roar out, "Well done, Dr. Sam!" The young ladies had left the quilt and had come to the window to see Kate and Hedley driving off; but Dr. Sam's appearance created some suspicion. When Kate appeared at the door, and bounded into Dr. Sam's vehicle, a chorus of "Oh! oh!" came from the window above.

"Well, if I ever!" said one.

"Did you ever!" said another.

"If that's not the best!" said a third.

"If that's not the worst!" said a fourth.

With a common impulse they rushed downstairs in time to hear Steve say, "Well, Heddie, that's a bad one; to let a fellow take your girl from under your nose! Haw! haw!"

If Hedley had quietly put "Kite" in the stall again he would have done his manhood more honor, but he was stung by Steve's remark. Turning to Mary Munroe he asked, "Will you take a little drive?"

Mary assented, and the next minute they were speeding down the road after Kate and Dr. Sam, whom they overtook and passed within half a mile.

When nearing the next corner Hedley overtook a high load of empty apple barrels that was being driven for distribution. "Kite" was shy about passing the swaying, creaking pile of newly-made barrels that were still emitting the odor of the cooperage. Hedley took out the whip to put her past the load. "Kite" went half-way past, then slackened up, lifting her showy head and neck as if in terror of the load. Down came the whip, and "Kite" bounded forward, and sideways, as if trying to reach the cross road. But the wheels went off the grade, and the phaeton went over, dropping out Mary and Hedley unhurt. The next bound the grey went up on the road, and the sudden jerk brought the phaeton upright again. Then, with all the speed of blood and training, "Kite" went down the concession, taking the phaeton with her. Mary and Hedley declined Dr. Sam's offer to drive them back, and started homeward walking.

Mrs. Stenson had gone into the house after Kate so suddenly departed, and remained a few moments alone to assuage her disappointment. Her garment smelling of "myrrh" was laid aside. Hatred and the desire for revenge took the place of charity. Dave also had seen the affair, and although he had warned his wife about the danger of the undertaking, he was mortified at the slight offered to Hedley. Here was another claim laid up against Dr. Sam.

Mrs. Stenson came out to the platform again, and

was soon joined by Dave. They had stood a few moments conversing, when suddenly the grey dashed foaming around the corner from the opposite way, trailing two broken shafts and part of the crossbar. Her legs were cut and bleeding, and her mouth torn with the trailing lines. At sight of the half-crazed animal Mrs. Stenson screamed and fainted away. She was carried into the house, and after an extended period of insensibility she regained consciousness and found Hedley and Mary standing beside her.

When the writing class was over that night, Longfellow went to his room, and Rowdy the white bulldog went with him. He had taken tea with Dr. Sam's mother. Thus a meeting with Steve had been avoided.

That night Steve and Dave Stenson sat till a late hour in the back room talking. Dave was drinking to drown his disappointment, for his mare was ruined for the October "meet" in the city. That night the dark seed-thought which had dropped into Dave's mind weeks ago sprang up into a full-grown resolution, and Steve had consented to take part. Their plot was to rob Longfellow, who, they believed, had a large amount of money; and having secured him, they would fire the house and let him perish. The time fixed was Tuesday night of the next week, when the writing class would come to an end, for they suspected he would leave the following day.

II.

WHAT IS IT WORTH?

SIX people sat down to tea that same Friday evening in Mr. Stafford's comfortable little dining-room. It had always been a pleasure to these young people to spend an evening in this home; and, therefore, they were as pleased with one another's company as six people could well be. Men in the holiest ministry find some spirits more congenial than others, persons with whom those ties that make the bond of close friendship are stronger. Friendship is, of necessity, selective. The person who may be trusted as a friend is not every person's friend in just the same sense. He who scatters the seeds of friendship will reap a harvest of the same; but very few persons are able to hold a large circle of friends, and retain all in a friendship that has depth and worth. Mr. Stafford never made many *close* friends; but the few whom he did confide in found him always true.

The management of the home devolved chiefly on Lucinda. This evening her table was set with simple, beautiful china, and provided with such delicacies, tasty and inviting, as this daughter of the parsonage was skilful in making. The cut flowers that filled an old Roman vase occupying the centre of the table poured forth their aroma, as a sweet incense of wel-

come. This was one of those little gatherings of pure friendship, natural and inartificial, that pour richness and meaning into life.

Mr. Stafford's well-chosen library was a great attraction to Arthur and Dr. Sam. The study adjoined the dining-room. Across the narrow hall from the study was the parlor, into which, after having adjusted the "tea things," the three ladies retired, while Arthur, Dr. Sam, and Mr. Stafford went into the study, and in both rooms conversation was soon at an interesting stage.

Among the most voluble men, sometimes the conversation will drop and "solemn pauses" will occur; but this is rarely the case with young ladies. At one of these pauses in the study, when each of the three gentlemen seemed to be ruminating a moment on what had just been said, notes of animated conversation and laughter came from the parlor. Arthur had a suspicion that Kate was telling her friends of the remarkable paring bee, and the sequel; at any rate, the characteristic fertility of youthful feminine intellect prevented any such thing as monotony or "solemn pauses."

"Sam," said Arthur, "don't it beat all how girls can talk, and keep up a conversation? Just hear that—" and he paused.

Kate's voice was heard rising higher, as she came up in her narrative near to the point of risibility, which, having been reached, all three joined in a hearty laugh that rang across the hall, and caused the gentlemen to smile.

“ ‘ Thirteen to the dozen,’ as I once heard a speaker put it,” remarked Dr. Sam.

“ How is it ? ” asked Arthur.

“ Physiologists assert,” went on Dr. Sam, “ that a woman’s organs of speech are much more delicately formed than a man’s, and thus more readily respond to the mental stimulus, and from these premises some have proceeded to argue that women should be advanced more in preaching, because their power of appeal is necessarily more tender and searching. What is your opinion, Mr. Stafford ? ”

At this point in Dr. Sam’s words there appeared to be a lull in the parlor ; then Marion’s voice was heard calling across to the study :

“ Are you gentlemen talking about us ? ”

“ Well, only in a general way,” replied Arthur.

“ I thought I heard a word or two that were not quite general,” said the voice.

“ If there has been no conversation about ladies, in a general way, in the parlor since you went in, we will all apologize for saying anything,” said Arthur ; but as no explanations were forthcoming, the trio in the study, having had the spell of silence broken, and having found a new subject in “ women preachers,” resumed conversation, and soon it was in progress again in the parlor.

Several movements, religious and secular, were making themselves felt at this time, and the evening afforded Arthur and Dr. Sam an opportunity of obtaining Mr. Stafford’s views on some of them. The Salvation Army was spreading abroad ; church union was

being discussed ; the Young People's movement was exciting considerable interest, and the temperance question was being brought more and more under the notice of Parliament. The three former Arthur had taken notice of especially, while Dr. Sam's greatest interest centered in the temperance movement.

An invitation to certain people to exercise the imaginative faculty, and look into this home on this particular evening, may not be out of place.

That pastor of the rich congregation, in which are found persons who pay largely to the funds of the church with money made in the liquor traffic—look into this home, my friend, and look upon this young man. Or that modest, sympathetic pastor who cannot have the heart to pronounce in strong, fearless language against the liquor traffic, because that in his congregation are to be found ladies whose husbands are drawing salaries or dividends from the traffic. These ladies probably take a large part in benevolent work in his congregation. Sympathy for them has sealed your lips, my friend. Look upon this young man.

There are also very learned persons among us. It is something to be able to think that society is not likely to rot on account of ignorance. There is the learned man who talks evasively about the impossibility of making men sober "by Act of Parliament." By such sophistry this man avoids committing himself on so great a social and moral question. Let the learned man also look upon this young man, eager to catch any word of hope on the prohibition of the

liquor traffic, that may fall from the lips of this aged minister.

I wish such men no wrong. I do not desire them any evil. But if it would stimulate their zeal and courage to the point of determined and decisive action ; if it would open their sealed lips and prompt them to raise their voices to plead for this great cause, I could wish that they might have, for a sufficient time, the same or a similar cause for a deep, intense interest in the prohibition of this death-dealing traffic that Sam Martin had, as he sat that evening in Mr. Stafford's home. We must think of all the proud ambitions of the young man ; his ability, far beyond the ordinary ; his own pure life-motives ; his high sense of right, his deep sense of wrong ; his passionate love for the mother, whom he held dearer than life. Then let us think of how we would be likely to view the liquor traffic.

When a convenient pause in the conversation came, he asked Mr. Stafford : "Do you think we shall ever reach prohibition in Canada ?"

"I certainly do," replied the venerable minister. "I may not live to see it ; but I think you young men shall see it, if you should live to be as old as I am now. I see no reason to doubt this. An education is in progress, silently, perhaps, that is lifting the tide of public sentiment against the traffic. The conviction grows that the traffic is a deep disgrace to all engaged in it, who build their wealth from the sufferings and ruin of others. This conviction rests on the further conviction that the traffic is radically wrong,

and has not one redeeming feature. It is a worse species of traffic in the bodies and souls of men than negro slavery in the United States ever was. Slaves might be Christians, and might also be moderately happy in their home life under a good master. They might be educated, might become useful members of society, and might add something to the nation's wealth even in servitude. But those enslaved by drink can be none of these. They are degraded in this life and they are ruined for eternity, sad though it is for us to have to say it of those who are so much sinned against. Every drunkard also decreases immensely the nation's wealth. I have never heard even liquor men endeavor to point out any redeeming features in their traffic, because their deepest convictions are that it is wholly an evil, but it brings them wealth. They make their defence on the ground of carrying on "a legitimate business," which, I am sorry to admit, in the present condition of our laws, is true. These are considerations, however, that the ruling powers cannot always ignore, and even now they are not so much ignoring them as evading their plain duty in relation to them."

Here the aged minister rose up. He seemed, as he stood before the young men, like an ancient seer, whose prophetic vision discerned things which, though they would not happen in his day, would, nevertheless, come to pass. "The time will come," he continued, "when it will be forced on parliament to prohibit the traffic in intoxicating liquors; or, in the event of refusal, they will be swept away to make

room for men who will enact such legislation. I venture to say that many who are regarded as political leaders now, and exercise a large influence in public affairs, will not be convinced. They are counting, no doubt, on a divided temperance vote, and are depending on the time-worn cry of 'party.' Some are counting not alone on prejudice, but on the ignorance of many electors, who are not informed on the liquor problem, and whom they take care not to inform to any valuable extent. The information now being given to the people on the liquor question comes from neither politicians nor 'party organs,' but from temperance workers and the religious press; but for these the electorate in Canada would still be in comparative ignorance on the question.

"But we are drawing near the end of this. The day is at hand when individuality will rise above 'party' traditions, hoary with age and putrid from the corrupting influence of unscrupulous leaders, to whom the high trust of a nation's welfare has been no more than a game for desperate and ambitious men. We are nearing a time when humanity and Christian love will overcome the greed and selfishness that have been the evil inspiration of the liquor traffic; when an educated and regenerated Canadian society will voluntarily assume its responsibility for civic righteousness and social purity, and whose representative legislature shall put itself on record in consistent and prohibitory enactments against the traffic. I can scarcely hope to live to see it, but I hope you two young men may; and I can rest assured that you

will do all you can to help forward the cause and to strengthen the forces that shall bring to pass so grand a consummation in moral reform."

Mr. Stafford had spoken like one with an opportunity that he might never have again, and which he therefore desired to use to the utmost advantage. He was conversing with two young men on the threshold of life, and he must not fail to make an impression that would stay with them. He did make such an impression. Often, in after years, when contending for some great moral issue, in which they had to confront an antagonistic public opinion, when feeling the need of some inspiration to help them to go forward in the path of duty, those young men found it in the retrospect of that evening in the minister's study, as in memory they recalled the flowing white beard, the silken white hair, the flashing, fearless eye and flaming eloquence of this aged servant of Christ.

It is worth the toil and the sacrifices of a lifetime to leave such an impression on two young minds and hearts as Mr. Stafford left that evening on Arthur and Dr. Sam.

Mr. Stafford might have gone on, had not Lucinda called from the parlor, "Are you preaching a sermon, pa?"

"No, Lucy," he replied; "not just preaching, but perhaps some thoughts from my sermon for next Sunday came into my mind as I was speaking."

"Come in with us," said Lucinda, now coming to the study door, "and we will have some music."

Dr. Sam was seated near Marion, rather apart from the others, and in conversation with her he learned that she was desirous of entering upon some literary work—journalism perhaps. For the present she could not leave her father. The attachments of her home forbade her departure. The conversation also brought out Marion's interest in the temperance problem, in which she was evidently as much concerned as Mr. Stafford.

"I understand you are going to have a writing contest," said Mr. Stafford to Dr. Sam; "and also that the class desire me to act as a judge. Have you any idea of who are likely to win the prizes?"

"Not the least," replied Dr. Sam. "They all appear interested, and have been progressing well, I believe."

"I am beginning to feel some interest in that man Longfellow," said Mr. Stafford. "I suppose I shall see him that evening. I met him once, and something in his face has lingered with me. It is strange I have not come across him since. Why does he not leave that old tavern, I wonder? It runs in my mind there must be something in the background with him. There seems to be some mystery about him. He promised to call again, but has not done so."

"I think he will leave after the writing class is done," replied Dr. Sam; "so he intimated to me to-day. I think he is not very comfortable at "The Briton's Lodge" now. Dave blames him for drawing off the young men. Old Mervin Robbs called on him to-day at our home and tried to induce him to review

his book, and also to write his obituary, but he declined both. You know old Mervin pays a visit to the Lodge once in a while, and I imagine that he has discovered something which he has made known to Longfellow. I think this has hastened his decision to go away soon."

"Did you say he wanted Longfellow to write his obituary?" asked Marion.

"His obituary?" replied Dr. Sam. "The old man is anxious to have the facts of his religious life written up carefully before he passes away, so that a good obituary may appear in some religious paper after his demise. He started for the river yesterday, intending to drown himself, but Mr. Daysmore saw him leaving and brought him back. I promised him to-day that I would review his book if he would give me all the time I might require. So he consented and left the manuscript with me."

"What subject has he written on?" asked Mr. Stafford.

"The title he has chosen for his book," replied Dr. Sam, "is 'The Key to all the Temptations of the Devil.' Do you not think I am quite privileged in being pressed to review it?"

Mr. Stafford was laughing, as he observed, "I hope he has put good stuff into the 'Key.' It will need to be strong to unlock all of the Old Fellow's secrets; but certainly, if he has found the 'key,' the book ought to be published. If he understands so much about temptations why does he ever contemplate suicide?"

"Perhaps he is disappointed in love," suggested Marion, looking toward Kate and smiling.

"Oh, I know what you mean, Marion," said Mr. Stafford. "There is nothing in that report."

"Well, pa," replied Marion, "I admit that I have no right to be too positive, but I am not of your opinion on that matter."

Then Marion gave an extended narration of what she had observed at Barberry Cottage. Nor did she omit Miss Trillman's question as to whether she had ever had an offer of marriage. Marion proved very entertaining and humorous when joking at her own expense, and her father laughed more heartily than she had seen him do for years.

"You were beaten there, Marion," said her father.

"Well, pa," replied this amiable daughter, "you will at least admit that the defeat was not through any fault of my own. I felt real sorry, I assure you, in having to answer Miss Trillman in the negative."

The three young people drove home at a late hour. Kate was silent, but listening.

"Arthur, what is it worth to be able to look back on such a life as Mr. Stafford's?" asked Dr. Sam, as they drove along in the pale moonlight.

"It's worth infinity," replied Arthur. "No use in trying to estimate it in material value. You can't do it."

"Mr. Stafford lifted me up so high to-night," said Dr. Sam, "that I could scarcely get back again so as to converse and act in a natural manner. Didn't he grow eloquent when speaking on the liquor question?"

We may look for something grand on Sunday if that was a prelude, which I presume it was, from what he replied to Lucinda."

Mr. Stafford had indeed set the spirits of both these young men aflame. He had poured in upon them the energy of a strong purpose that would never cease to throb in their souls.

What is it worth to do this? Yes, that is the question—what is it worth?

III.

CONSUMMATIONS.

SUNDAY came—a beautiful autumn Sunday, with sunshine and a mild atmosphere, in which hung that peculiar haze which is to Canadians the sure indication of Indian summer. The beautiful day brought out a large number to church. Some were even induced to attend through a vague curiosity, thinking that something might follow, even on Sunday, the events of the week ; so that Mr. Stafford announced the text to the largest audience he had addressed for some time. He spoke from Matt. vii. 20, and confined himself at first to thoughts suggested by the passage or implied in it. He pointed out that the Master here set forth a universal truth, based on a universal law of nature. In creation this had been established, as might be seen in Gen. i. 11, and the principle entered into the constitution of nature. In this, nature illustrated man's moral life ; for as “ the good tree bringeth forth good fruit,” so in the lives of men—good conduct, good thoughts, good feelings, all have good results, that may be termed fruits ; or, reasoning from effect to cause, we may know whether any work, or calling, or profession, is good or evil by looking at its fruits, as seen in the lives of men.

He would invite them to apply this principle to the liquor traffic. What were its fruits ? Here he enumerated many. They were evil and never good. The principle was valid in this case, and therefore the traffic in strong drink must be evil. He knew of nothing good in it. He had known some even whose morals were good before entering the liquor business, but who had been ruined by it in soul and body. We would look in vain for any good ever to come from it. He therefore concluded that a traffic which caused evil so universally, of almost every conceivable kind, should be abolished by law ; and nothing less than prohibitory law could effectually prevent the evil tree producing its evil fruit.

While Mr. Stafford was preaching, a man named Pilling, the teacher of the Bible class in the Sunday School, rose up, and with intentional noise and stir, went out ; but Mr. Stafford had seen such a thing occur before and took no notice of Pilling's departure.

The sermon was commonplace, except for the unusual fervor that animated the aged minister's words. The wave of inspired utterance that rested upon him the previous Friday night had not yet subsided, and it transformed commonplace truths into the spirit of a new revelation. His voice swelled to the rich fulness of his middle life, while in the conclusion of his sermon he pleaded with young and old to shun the wine cup, and exert all their personal and civic influence to put away the liquor traffic from the land.

Mr. Stafford's sermon had not been announced

previously and, therefore, came as a great surprise to many. The Stenson family were present. They had brought company with them, too, Mr. and Mrs. Varro, who had driven out from the city that morning. Mr. Varro was one of the liquor fraternity. His real purpose in this visit was to see how Dave's mare "Kite" would match one of the team he drove. At Mrs. Stenson's suggestion, they had all come to church. It was a new way for them to spend a portion of a Sunday, going to a country church. Mrs. Stenson had spoken in high terms of Mr. Stafford, too. And they must listen to such insults!

A wonderful impression rested upon the meeting that Sunday, as was indicated by the silent hush between the preacher's sentences. The religious consciousness of each discerned the Divine Presence.

But the appeal of love does not always prevail. Mrs. Stenson went home mortified, humiliated, angry.

"Your dear old pastor gave us quite a blowing up to-day," said Dave to his wife that evening, when alone.

"If you had not mentioned it, I was not going to do so," she replied; "but I will tell you now, he will never insult my company or myself in his church again, for I shall never listen to him again."

Mrs. Stenson kept her promise. Had she known what the consummation would be, and how close at hand it was, she might have hesitated to isolate herself from so true a friend. She wrote to ask Mr. Stafford to remove her name from membership in the church. Mr. Stafford did so, asking no explanations.

Here were the first-fruits of his sermon. His experience is by no means uncommon. It is encouraging to know that there are still to be found those ministers of Christ who stand in the place of duty and take the consequences.

Tuesday evening came laden with fates and lighted by moonlight. Longfellow had spent most of the afternoon with Dr. Sam in the school and went home with him for tea. When leaving for the class, he bade Mrs. Martin a kind farewell and closed her hand over a twenty dollar gold piece.

The class met at seven-thirty. Longfellow received their second specimens of writing, endorsed. These he carefully placed between the leaves of a note-book, in which the former specimens had been preserved.

At eight o'clock the door was thrown open and a large number of interested friends came into the school-house. The appearance of Marion and Lucinda was the sign that Mr. Stafford was in the ante-room, where the other chirographical judge, Mr. Minnes, awaited him. Taking up the book of specimens, Longfellow now went out with Dr. Sam. The latter first introduced him to Mr. Minnes, who sat at the table, then they turned toward the side window where Mr. Stafford stood. The two old men were now face to face.

"I have heard much of you, Mr. Longfellow," said Mr. Stafford, as he extended his hand, which Longfellow grasped with a peculiar warmth, as he replied, "Indeed, I hope we shall be friends."

Having introduced the two, Dr. Sam moved over

to the table and laid down the book of specimens which Longfellow had turned over to him, and the old men were left alone.

Mr. Stafford had watched Longfellow closely from his entrance into the anteroom. As they stood face to face, Longfellow observed his close scrutiny and appeared to discern his thoughts. As Mr. Stafford was about to speak again, Longfellow held up a warning finger, and said :

“ I think I understand your thoughts. Yes; your vision may have failed a little, like my own, but mental images are difficult to efface. We are both growing old. Years fly by rapidly.” Then in a lower tone : “ It will not do to say anything here. I shall call on you sometime before morning.”

“ Well ! Well ! I declare ! If this is —,” but Mr. Stafford checked himself, and only continued to hold the hand of the other, and when Dr. Sam looked around he was surprised to see them still standing with clasped hands.

“ Well, we must proceed to the examination, I suppose,” said Mr. Stafford, going over to the table. Then Longfellow, having given a few necessary explanations about the arrangement of the specimens, went out with Dr. Sam.

In three-quarters of an hour the examination was completed ; then the judges passed into the school-room, and a hush fell on the audience. Mr. Stafford spoke :

“ It was not an easy matter to decide this competition, because the class is so large, and the progress

made by many of you in this month has been so great. We have done the best we could to judge impartially, and we have decided that the two persons whom I shall now name have made the most progress. Of the ladies, Miss Kate Medford—”

He could not go on for the applause that followed the announcement; but when it subsided, Kate was asked to come forward and receive the prize. Longfellow presented her with a costly diamond ring. She was very pale, and was glad when she reached her seat again. Then Mr. Stafford made a sign that he would speak, and all was silence again.

“The name of the young man who has, in our opinion, made most progress is Joker Bohn. Come forward, Joker!” Then he sat down, but Joker did not appear.

Where was Joker? He was certainly in the room. All eyes turned to where he had sat. Some called, “Come up, Joker!” and others began to clap.

“Joker Bohn!” Those words, his own name, had dazed him, and sounded like the call of some strange destiny. He, the winner of a prize for making the greatest progress in writing in so large a class! Was he dreaming, as he had dreamed many a time when he lived over again the scenes of the day? No; he was awake, for real voices were calling, “Come up, Joker!” and he had really done something worthy of some person’s notice. “Come up, Joker!” Yes, Joker will go up; but he will first go down. The little fellow bowed his head on the desk before him and flooded it with tears. Kate saw him weeping,

and went over to him. She put her soft hand around his cheek, and said, "Don't cry, Joker, the prize is yours," and then she began to weep herself, as she had felt much like doing since resuming her seat. Some strange spell was upon Kate; she could not tell what it was. So she sat beside Joker, drawn to him by some mysterious sympathy. Mr. Stafford took the gold pen, and going down to Joker thrust the handle of it into his hand, saying as he did so, "God bless you, my little fellow ! and may this be the beginning of many prizes you shall win in life. You have done splendidly this past month." His kind words only made Joker weep more. Since going to Mrs. Medford's he had been receiving so many kind, encouraging words ; it was like a new world to him, and these words from the old minister completely broke him down. His tears were the symbols of the inexpressible gratitude of a noble heart that had been newly opened up to the inflow of a great tide of affection. *Joker will go up !*

Dr. Sam arose, and after pausing a moment to clear a lump from his throat, which tried again to secure its place when he had half uttered the sentence, he said to Longfellow, "We desire your attention a little while, Mr. Longfellow." Then Arthur came forward, and, on behalf of the class, read an address to the instructor, which set forth the high esteem in which the members of the class held him, and their appreciation of the kind interest he had shown in their welfare ; and, "as a mark of our esteem, we beg you to accept of this ink-horn and

quill, which the members of the class will be pleased to have you employ in future correspondence with them." Here Jack McNair came forward and presented Longfellow with a writing-stand of solid silver, having a beautiful silver quill, with a gold, diamond-pointed pen.

Longfellow was deeply moved at parting with the writing class, and it was with difficulty that he made a reply. Then, after a few more words from Mr. Stafford and Mr. Minnes, the meeting broke up, every pupil going over to shake hands with Longfellow. Joker was near the last, and he began to weep again when he bade him good-bye; but the tall man stooped and whispered in his ear, "I will see you again, Joker, be a hard worker at school," and then the boy seemed more satisfied. Kate was the last to come forward, and when Longfellow bade her good-bye, he could no longer conceal his emotion. "Good-bye Katie," he said. Then, stooping, he kissed the soft hand placed in his and turned away.

There were loungers about the tavern after the class, and among them Steve Fitzhugh, who was drinking a good deal. Longfellow went to his room, and hastily packed his little belongings into his large bag, preparing for departure. Rowdy had followed him up the stairs, and called at his door. When admitted, he sprang upon the bed and began to whimper.

"Don't cry, Rowdy," said Longfellow, "I will be back again, and I hope to meet you." He fondled Rowdy's neck, and stooping down, placed his cheek

against the dog's leonine jaw. Then he picked up his bag and cane and set them outside the door. Leaving the lamp burning, he locked the door and removed the key. The dog uttered a piteous moan as he heard Longfellow moving softly down the stairs, and out the hall door. Then he lay down upon the bed against the foot-board.

A short time afterwards Longfellow was admitted to the parsonage. Mr. Stafford and his two daughters were waiting for him. While they spend several hours in listening to a wonderful tale which outlined the story of a life, we may follow the events that happened at "The Briton's Lodge."

About one o'clock all had departed from the tavern except Steve. The two men were now alone, facing the deed of robbery they had planned together. Dave Stenson had not been drinking as much as the others who had spent the evening with him and Steve; so that when midnight came he was still sober and eager to carry out the plan. Two or three times that evening he had intentionally referred to Steve's defeat at the hands of Longfellow, and had so succeeded in stirring up the spirit of revenge in Steve that he was ready to choke the life out of Longfellow if only he could get his brawny hands on his neck.

About half-past one, Stenson said to his partner, "The sooner the better now." Then, muffling their boots and taking a lantern turned low, they began to ascend the stairs. They noticed a light in Longfellow's room by the opening under the door, and Stenson set down his lantern at the head of the

stairs, then moved slowly towards the door. There were pricked ears within that heard them, and Rowdy drew himself up into a crouching position closer to the foot-board, in the shadow of which his round, white body resembled a pillow.

Crash! Steve had thrown his weight against the door and torn out the lock. Then they both stepped quickly in, but the room was empty.

"No one here!" cried Steve.

"He's below the bed," said Dave.

Steve stooped down and looked under the bed. As he did so, the white object that had looked like a pillow bounded toward him, and the leonine jaws closed over his right shoulder, and by the force of the plunge, man and dog went to the floor! Rowdy had waited more than a year for this grip, but he had his antagonist at last, and he would hold him. Steve was pinned to the floor, and could not rise. He began to curse and roar with pain, but every struggle seemed only to fasten the dog's jaws tighter. Stenson tried to kick the dog off, but Rowdy moved this way and that, avoiding several blows aimed at him, one or two of which struck Steve. Then Stenson ran for Jimmie, who came quickly, and tried to coax off the dog; but it was in vain. The jaws came yet tighter, and a bone cracked in Steve's shoulder; then the room grew dark and the light seemed to go out, and Steve became insensible. They dragged man and dog down the stairs and into the bar-room, where Stenson seized the large iron poker to smash the dog's head, but he feared to strike lest the shifty animal would avoid

the blow, and he might injure Steve. He was becoming desperate. He seized the dog's collar, and put his foot on his neck and trampled him to the floor, but not until Jimmie managed to slip a small iron poker, heated in the fire, between the jaws and pry sideways, did the grip relax in the least. Even then they fought for every hair's breadth they gained, and at length the jaws were opened far enough to relieve Steve, who was now quite unconscious. Stenson was now like an infuriated demon. He held the dog up by the collar and pounded his head with his fist. Rowdy fought and struggled fiercely to get at him in turn, while Jimmie pled to be allowed to take the dog away; but he also received a stunning blow that sent him to the floor. Then Stenson managed to get hold of a stick of wood, and with it battered the dog into insensibility, after which he kicked him cruelly about the bar-room. This done, he went at Jimmie and kicked him brutally. He might also have gone at Steve, but the uproar had awakened his wife, who hastily threw on some garments and came down. Her appearance, together with his own exhaustion, stayed the madman's rage, so that he yielded to her entreaties.

The frightful appearance of the bar-room almost caused Mrs. Stenson to faint. Rowdy's limp body was hurled out on the road. Steve had to be put to bed and his shoulder bathed with the strongest liquor. Jimmie crawled back to his room, from which he never came forth alive. Two months afterwards he died. During this period of weakness Dave tried to

make atonement for the wanton abuse of that night, but the old hostler never rallied.

About three o'clock in the morning Longfellow was preparing to leave the parsonage. The hours had slipped away and none of them realized how far into the night they were. As he stood in the hall, ready to start, he heard a low whimper at the door. He knew the cry for sympathy, and opening the door quickly he saw Rowdy on the steps, his body covered with blood, his eyes almost closed, his head cut and swollen. "Ah, Rowdy, I fear you got what was in store for me," said Longfellow. Then he said to Mr. Stafford, "Will you care for this dog till I send or call for him again?"

"I certainly will," said Mr. Stafford, taking the dog into the house; but Rowdy wanted to go with Longfellow, and they left together.

Longfellow walked to the home of Dr. Sam, who was waiting for him. They were soon on the road driving behind Dr. Sam's pony toward the railway station, where he took the first train for London, thence to Toronto. That afternoon he was pressing his way through the crowds on Yonge Street, and Rowdy trotted at his heels.

IV.

THE BURKE SOCIETY.

THE meetings of the literary society made a welcome variation in the routine of rural life, which is more monotonous in the autumn and winter seasons. The membership of the society was increased by a number of young men of some literary taste, from the school sections on either side, north and south, of Bellheath. It was decided to denominate it "The Burke Society," after the great parliamentary orator. Meetings were to be held every week, with an "open literary" once a month. Mr. Minnes was chosen "Speaker" of this august body. Arthur and Dr. Sam were selected as side leaders in debate. Ladies were admitted to all privileges of the society.

The debates in the Burke Society began with very commonplace subjects, such as :

"Resolved,—That life in the city is more desirable than country life."

"Resolved,—That the Bible has done more for the civilization of the world than the sword."

"Resolved,—That men of letters have done more for the nation than statesmen."

This latter subject was debated in an open meeting, and it gave so much satisfaction to the audience that at the close of the meeting the society received an

addition of ten new members, one of whom was Neil McNair, a thing which need cause no great surprise, if the mental strength of the average Scotchman is kept in mind. When Jack McNair, who had been one of the first to join, made a very creditable speech at this open meeting, it put Neil in fine fettle with the new literary organization. He thought that as an elder, and as a good citizen, he could not do better than join. In fact, it now became a matter of duty, he considered.

The above-mentioned subjects were such as the young people in any well-informed community might find a good deal of matter on to present in a debate, so that the Society made a good start and created very favorable impressions on all minds. Neil's example in becoming a member induced several other elderly gentlemen to apply for membership, four of whom consented to debate the subject, "Resolved,—That the farmer is more independent in his vocation than the mechanic." Dr. Sam led the affirmative, and was supported by Neil McNair and Joe Houson. The latter agreed with Neil in politics. As leader in the negative, Arthur was supported by Hugh Brien and Isaac Carey. Mr. Carey had given up teaching for farming, and was rather fond of airing his views on all subjects. Neil knew them both to be on the opposite side to himself in politics, and it nerved him to excel. He resolved to make them bow their heads in shame. The leaders privately agreed to leave the debate largely to the older men, for all were expecting a rare treat from them.

Neil spent the two weeks which they had for preparation in carefully looking up old columns of the *Leader*, of which he had a goodly stock preserved. He also disentombed from his old writing-desk certain selections from the *Agriculturist*, which had been reserved for a special occasion like this one. The absolute and infallible authority of these two journals Neil no more doubted than he doubted Genesis and Deuteronomy. With many an emptying of his black pipe he put together his "speech," and it was scarcely possible to approach or disturb him in any way while he was at it. Two or three times, when Jack or his mother ventured to ask him a question, he replied, "Can ye no stap yer bletherin' and lee' me alane? Dan't ye see I'm beesy?" The look that accompanied his words was terrifying. It was a great relief to his family when the evening of the debate came.

As Neil was second on affirmative, it gave him first opportunity of the four. When he confronted his opponents in debate, and knowing they were also opponents in politics, he could not resist a preface to his address by a short reference to the manner in which Gladstone's policy was the ruin of farmers in the Old Country, and he knew the policy of the political party to which he did not belong would be sure to do the same in this country, in fact, Neil pointed out, was now doing it; and he would proceed further to show them how. Here Isaac Carey arose and said, "I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker."

"I order you ta sit doon," said Neil, "an' no try ta

stap me frae tellin' what's true for it's no my ane ideas, but I got them frae twa peepers that dinna tell lees as da your perty organs."

Here some who voted the same ticket as Neil, and some others who were enjoying the tilt between the old men and were anxious to see it go on, applauded, and Neil looked approval.

"Let him state his point of order," said the Speaker, looking toward Carey; and Carey was about to rise again when Neil called out, "I ha' the floor, and I command him ta keep his seat. Mr. Carey maun na think he's the only ane here that kens onything aboot order. I'm as weel posted in them things as himsel', and I ken the pol'sy o' his perty, which, of coorse, he's afraid I will mak' known."

Neil was becoming more irritated every time he spoke, which made the matter all the more amusing to the back seats, and one or two voices called out, "Stick to the floor, Neil." The expression on the old elder's face was evidence enough of his determination, and Mr. Carey, despairing of making his "point of order" known by rising, called it out from where he sat: "We are not discussing party politics. Mr. McNair has broken the rules of the Society, and is not keeping to the subject of debate."

It was well he made his point short, for Neil was ready to take him up at the last word.

"Yer juist showin' up the colors o' yer perty in tryin' to avade the point. That's what ye rascals and heepocrites ha' been dain' ever syne they got poower in the country. It's a peety they war ever trusted

and they ha' been makin' it almost impossible fer farmers ta leeve honest lives ; but they'll no reign lang. Dinna fear, I ken my point o' order fine."

Neil, in his irritation, spoke in his most primitive Scotch dialect, as he was almost certain to do in such circumstances. It suited his native sarcasms better. But this only added to the merriment evoked by his digression and this display of tenderness and predilection for Tory politics. The Speaker, fearing that the debate might degenerate into a burlesque, and thus degrade the Society's good standing, now kindly but firmly reminded Neil of the fact that he was digressing, and asked him to "keep to the point."

"I stan' approved," said Neil (he meant reproved, but forgot the word in his excitement), and then he made an effort to collect himself, as the laughter of the back seats subsided and order was restored. If, in the first place, he had kept to his "speech," he might have done very well ; but now it had gone from him like the monarch's dream. He held his breath hard for some moments, seeking in vain to get a grip of some stray ends of the well-prepared address ; then, looking at the Speaker, said, "I doot I'll ha' ta callecket mysel' a meennit afore I proceed, and tak' a bit smok'," and out came the old pipe.

"If you sit down your time is over," said the Speaker.

"Ower or no," replied Neil, "I maun ha' a pull o' th' pipe," and he stepped out into the anteroom amid hilarious laughter, while the debate proceeded in order.

The addresses that followed were short, and Dr. Sam did not take any privilege of reply. Neil had felt the need of the pipe so much that he was just returning as the Speaker stood up to ask the meeting to vote on the decision.

“The affirmative first,” said he; “all who favor giving the decision to the affirmative please stand.” Two-thirds of the meeting arose, for Neil’s address, whether in order or out of order, carried everything before it. Neil had sat down, but when the vote was called he stood up to vote for his side.

“The debaters do not vote, Mr. McNair,” said the Speaker.

“Havers, maun!” cried out Neil; “I’ll alloo naebody ta tak’ awa’ ma richt ta a vote, especially whan I’m opposin’ the Leeberal rascals, as they ca’ themsels, but I ca’ them——”

The voters were resuming their seats at a sign from the chair, amid a roar of laughter at Neil’s second attempt, and the name he was going to bestow on the opposite party was lost to the crowd. Of course the affirmative won, and Neil was more than pleased with the result, especially when, afterwards, several told him that it was his address undoubtedly that had won the debate, and he remarked to them in reply, “I’m obleeged, indeed, for the compliment, an’ I ha’ every confidence in yer judgment.” Ever afterwards Neil spoke of that evening with satisfaction, for he numbered it among his greatest triumphs in political manœuvres. Some time afterwards, when his party came into power and he made application for the post

office for Jack, he gave a glowing account of this in his application, describing himself as "one man in a thousand;" and it ought to be told the reader that the application was as effectual as the "speech."

As the debate had been a short one, there was plenty of time left for deciding on a subject for the next evening. Dr. Sam had long been desirous of bringing the prohibition question before the young people of the community. He and Arthur had resolved to have the question debated, if possible, and had taken Jack McNair into their confidence. Jack now proposed this as a subject for the next meeting. Hedley Stenson now sprang a great surprise on the meeting, when he arose and stated that if he were allowed to bring his friend, Terrence Varro, from the city to assist him, they would defend the liquor traffic against any two in the society.

"You will remember, Hedley," said Arthur, "that such a debate must necessarily have a considerable educative influence. On such a question a debater ought to be expected to carry his conscience into the debate."

"That is what we mean it to have," replied Hedley. "We only want those to speak who shall be prepared to debate as they think, and not repeat what some old preacher has stuffed them with."

"I know of no one who has been stuffed, as you are pleased to call it," said Arthur, "so that I am free to mention a name. If Dr. Sam will support me I will lead the affirmative in a subject which I shall formulate to suit all concerned."

"I will support you gladly," said Dr. Sam.

"I accept," said Hedley. "Now let us have the subject."

In a few minutes Arthur handed a slip of paper to Mr. Minnes, on which he had dictated the subject of debate. It read: "Resolved,—That the liquor traffic is detrimental to the interests of the Canadian people, and that prohibition would be the best remedy for the evils of intemperance in our land."

This was satisfactory to Hedley. They agreed to hold the debate in two weeks, in an open meeting, each speaker to have half an hour, and at the discretion of the speaker each might be allowed any remnant of time a previous speaker did not employ. Jack had played his part well.

V.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

ARTHUR and Dr. Sam arranged a division of the subject. Arthur, as leader of the affirmative, was to trace the historic steps in the progress of the temperance movement, and also parliamentary action in relation to it. If time permitted, he would dwell on the analogy of this with other great social reforms. Dr. Sam would then have a free hand to take up any line that might seem the most suitable to him.

When Hedley Stenson took up the task of preparing himself, he realized that it was much easier to throw down a challenge than to make the necessary preparation to carry it through. However, he went to work preparing his arguments of defence. He certainly had the easier task of defending an established institution, all the virtues and advantages of of which, if it had any, might be seen. His opponents had the more difficult work of defending a theory of social conditions, which was only a theory as yet.

Hedley's friend, Terrence Varro, was a specimen of young men often met with in college life. He had ability, but being the son of a wealthy man in the city who had large interests in the liquor trade, there

was no demand for high effort made upon his natural resources, such as young men must put forth who have to depend upon themselves to rise. "Terry the Merry," his classmates called him, and the nickname was aptly descriptive. Terry had been disposed to regard the debate, from the first, somewhat lightly. He brought out a number of friends in two cabs to see him "walk over the country clodhoppers." As they were rather behind the crowd in getting to the schoolroom, not more than half of them got inside, much to the disgust of the other half, who prowled about swearing at the vulgarity of "these hayseeds," who did not know enough to have reserved seats for them. Terry was taken back a good deal when he saw the splendid figure of Arthur step on the schoolroom dais, followed by the other vigorous fellow with the strong face.

The country for several miles around had heard of the coming debate and who were to take part. Fully three hundred people crowded into the schoolroom and anteroom. The windows were lowered from the top, and every window was full of boys or men standing on the window-sills.

If Arthur or Dr. Sam had looked in the direction of Kate, they would have seen a pair of black eyes whose dilated pupils bespoke the suppressed excitement under which she awaited the issue. Kate was intensely interested in this debate. Why not? Arthur was to speak. Did she suspect that Hedley's challenge had been thrown down over her conduct the evening of the quilting party? Was Dr. Sam in

the debate to-night as her champion, rather than as a debater? Was it Arthur, or his friend, whose success she thrilled to behold to-night?

Mr. Minnes, having called the meeting to order, made request that everyone give the best attention, as there would be much in each one of the addresses worth hearing. Each side had their friends present, but he hoped that "fair play" would be the motto with all. Then he read over the subject of debate and called on the first speaker. A great storm of applause, the sure index of suppressed excitement, broke forth when Arthur Medford arose in his place and stepped forward.

Arthur spoke cautiously, at first slowly, feeling his way to the sure ground of self-control and nerve equilibrium. He pursued an historic line, going far back in the history of the provinces to show that the temperance and prohibition problem was not a new but an old one, since it had been discussed for half a century. Before Confederation, while the provinces were each governed by its own separate legislative assembly, the liquor question had been eagerly discussed. Even in those early days the legislative assemblies had found it necessary, as well as expedient, to place the traffic under license laws. They should have gone further and placed it under prohibitory laws. However, it had not been done. We must face that problem. This, he said, would show that we were not rash in entering upon legislative enactments that related to the prohibition of the liquor traffic.

He then traced the origin and growth of temper-

ance societies—the good and effective work they had done in the early days in keeping alive the temperance spirit, and so keeping the question fresh in the minds of the people, besides providing efficient organization, by which the question eventually was brought under the notice of the legislatures.

Next, he proceeded to trace the steps taken by parliament in response to the repeated petitions that had been presented, praying for prohibitory legislation, and he showed that little had been done by parliament beyond the appointing of committees and the receiving of reports from the same, upon which little or no action had been taken toward prohibition. "The temperance question," said Arthur, raising his voice, "has not been treated with common respect in the legislatures. It has been tossed like a hand-ball from one party to another, from one House to the other, and neither party has, up to the present, ever made it 'a plank in their platform,' all of which has been an effort to evade a plain duty. The question has been brought up to its present prominent position largely through the efforts of individual workers and temperance organizations. Parliament has not thrown its strong moral and educative influence on the side of prohibition, but has hindered rather than helped the movement. To neglect when we should act is to hinder. 'He that is not with us is against us.' No thanks to any parliament for any progress the movement has made. What they have given has been given grudgingly, and the scraps of legislation that from time to time have been produced have not

been the suggestions of the temperance people, who have felt them to be partial and inadequate. They have been the go-between efforts of paltering and venal politicians, afraid of the liquor party, and yet afraid to refuse the temperance people any advance. Thus, it has been impossible, so far, to make any true and proper estimate of the benefits of prohibition to this country, since the efforts of the temperance people have not been encouraged by the governing body."

The remainder of his address was taken up chiefly with reference to Maine and other places where prohibition had been tried. He had not finished all he had in hand when Mr. Minnes rang the bell and called time. Arthur had taken his full time, and on the whole, had done himself credit, in an address that contained some ideas new to Hedley and Terry, and rather threw them out on a few points each had in mind.

Hedley V. Stenson was then called. He was a college man, and was to be supported by another, and a good many were looking for addresses from them of more than ordinary learning and power. But college never gave any man brains, however it may assist in developing what he may have, and Hedley had not been started with a very good stock of that important equipment of life. Dissipation, too, had begun to tell on his brain, such as it had been, and this young man, who so habitually exercised little control over his appetites, found it difficult to control his mental powers at a time when success

depended so much on his power of concentration. This was nature's levy for the pleasures of dissipation. He was nervous in beginning to follow an address which had been well received. Those unseen influences were at work also by which a public speaker discerns whether he is in congenial and sympathetic touch with his audience, and Hedley now became aware that he was not. He was out of touch. Had it not been for the batch of notes he held in his nervous hand the rising, invisible tide would have swept him off his feet; but he rested a hand on the desk before him and held his position. Instead, however, of taking the advantage which the first place always gives to a speaker, where others are to follow, he began peppering objections at Arthur's address, and made frequent use of his notes for reference, several of which did not appear very appropriate, and their application disappointed the audience. Of course, Hedley made poor headway on such a line, and at the end of fifteen minutes of an address that was little better than the amateur effort of a school-boy, he was glad to take his seat, humiliated by his own failure, and most of the audience, too, were glad when he sat down. His feeling of shame was not relieved by the knowledge that Kate was in the audience, and Dr. Sam had yet to speak.

In reality, however, the audience were not so much out of sympathy with Hedley as he probably supposed. Many of them desired to see him do much better. But Hedley lacked that strong, aggressive individuality which either wins the listener through

persuasive power, as might have been seen in Arthur, or boldly seizes the audience, as if saying, "Listen ! I have something to say ; and if you do not believe me, at any rate listen !"

Dr. Sam was next speaker. This was the moment for which he had long waited and prepared himself. He possessed an immense power of memory and of concentration that enabled him to bring every acquisition of value to bear upon the occasion before him. There is something in a good debate that stirs the souls of both speakers and audience ; something that will cure headache and banish sleep ; something that awakens the martial spirit in the most apathetic dullard. Dr. Sam's spirit was gathering a mighty impetus from the past. He was in his element to-night, and as he swept his eyes over the audience the fiat went forth, "Listen !"

VI.

THE VOICE OF YOUNG CANADA.

“MR. MARTIN will have the privilege of fifteen minutes additional, if he desires, as only fifteen minutes were occupied by the last speaker,” said Mr. Minnes, in introducing Dr. Sam.

“It must not be expected,” began the speaker, “that in the short time allowed to my colleague and myself that we can deal exhaustively with this subject. The prohibition question is a very large one, so large and so universal that there is not a community, village, town or city from Halifax to Vancouver but is deeply interested in the question. There is scarcely any line of mercantile pursuits, nor any class of manufacturers, nor any profession, that has not an interest in it. All public institutions, all schools, colleges, universities, and all such places where the young mind is trained for future professional life, have also a deep interest in this question. So complex is our society, and so deeply and firmly has the liquor traffic insinuated itself into all departments of life and among every class of people, that wherever you touch society you come in contact with this omnipresent evil. You may therefore see how wide and comprehensive a problem it is, and of necessity

we must confine ourselves to a few leading lines of thought, any one of which would offer abundant material for a separate address.

"In the development of all those nations we commonly call Christian, as well as in some of the greater non-Christian nations, there have been great social and political crises, which the later historian has denominated 'epochs.' Existing social and political conditions became intolerable, and change became absolutely necessary to the welfare of the state. In some cases the ruling power resisted change, and such resistance precipitated their downfall, besides dissipating the forces of the nation. In other cases, by compliance with, and yielding to the demands of the age, the ruling powers have been strengthened and the vital forces of the nation consolidated, while the changes that followed have been progressive steps in the nation's development. Any person with even a moderate acquaintance with British history will recall many such crises in our national life that illustrate this.

"We Canadians will soon be face to face with the greatest social and economic problem that may ever reveal itself in our social order and national life ; that is, the question : Shall we, or shall we not, prohibit the liquor traffic in our country ? It cannot be long delayed, and we shall be called upon to decide this question by our votes, and believing as I do, with every capacity of conviction found in my being, that it is a detriment to the life of the people of Canada, from whatever point it may be viewed ;

believing also that prohibition would be the best remedy for the evils of the social drinking customs we have, I speak this evening to advocate such a reform, and such prohibitory enactment in law.

“Old institutions are hard to destroy. To eradicate them, whether they have been good or bad, is not the work of a year or a decade. It may be that the toilsome duty will be handed on from one generation to that which succeeds, as a heritage of difficult labor, requiring patience, persistence, energy and determination in the second generation, before the work begun by the fathers is completed. But as we assume all the advantages which our inheritance brings to us, we ought not to decline to take up those onerous tasks that also fall to us in this same line, and among these latter is this large task of abolishing the traffic in strong drink.

“This generation of Canadians is competent to deal with this question ; for we shall find that, ultimately, the whole problem of prohibition resolves itself into these questions : Are we Canadians capable of governing ourselves according to British constitutional principles ? Are we capable of exercising that degree of moral and political self-control that will guarantee the proper enforcement of those legislative measures, which, in our wisdom, we place upon our statute books ? We are ; and, therefore, I say the younger generation of Canadians are competent to deal with this question and make prohibitory laws a success. This generation is strongly imbued with prohibition sentiment. The standard of moral life is

comparatively high in Canada, and the civic conscience (which is no more than the social name for brotherly love) is much more largely awakened among Canadians than among many of those Christian nations with whom we might compare ourselves. These are the primary essentials of righteous national life, as they are also the forces that will be the strong safeguards of a prohibitory law when once it has been enacted.

"The numbers and growth of our population is a great factor in our national development, especially when, in this country, we have only a little over five millions of people, and yet have a territory quite capable of supporting one hundred millions. Canadians should economize life. What is the liquor traffic doing for our population? I have estimates from prominent politicians and eminent jurists who are in a position to investigate, and from these comes the admission that at least three thousand Canadians go to drunkard's graves annually, and some have made much higher estimates. It is very probable that the actual truth concerning the destruction of life from the use of liquor would place the total number much higher, since many deaths are reported as due to accident or disease that are really due to the use of liquor. Can we afford as a nation to make such an annual sacrifice of population? Are we guiltless if we do so? We cannot wash our hands and declare we are innocent, for has not the Creator in His Word, and in our moral consciousness, put the stamp of sacredness upon human life? We ought not, as individuals, nor as a

nation, to have any part in that by which the life of our fellow-men is destroyed—

“ Wherever wrong is done
To the humblest or the weakest 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us, and they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all the race.

“ If it be urged that the use of liquor is a matter of conscience and personal choice, I reply that all persons are not to a sufficient degree endowed with strength of will to resist that which they know will injure them. Appetite, debased and vitiated, has stifled conscience in them. There will always be, both of young and old, those weak persons who need the protection and guidance of the strong and self-reliant. We should guard such, for upon them chiefly come the ravages of the traffic.”

There was a thickness in Dr. Sam's voice at this point in his address, and most of those present could understand it. But he controlled the rising emotion, and continued.

“ We are pursuing a strange policy in endeavoring to increase our population. Our national doors are thrown wide open to Europe. Thousands every year are accepting our invitation to come and get a home, and upon these we spend eight dollars per capita. On the other hand, we continue a traffic which is destroying thousands of our best-born Canadians, who have a higher intelligence, generally speaking, than the foreigner, and who, with the advantage of Canadian birth, are capable of a higher citizenship,

and of contributing more to the permanent strength and material welfare of this nation. Yet for a small revenue, which I shall have occasion to show you is not derived in reality from the liquor traffic, we sacrifice annually these thousands of wealth-producing citizens. I ask you, is our policy, then, either consistent or humane? Does it become a Christian nation? And we are also to remember that in soliciting the people of foreign nations to become our fellow-citizens we are asking them to contribute, in turn, a portion of this annual sacrifice to Bacchus, a sacrifice which our national laws make inevitable.

“ I might further illustrate this thought by a reference to another movement that is beginning to gain ground. The great national disease of Canada is known as ‘The White Plague.’ About seven thousand people succumb to tuberculosis annually in the Dominion. It has become a matter of the deepest concern with the medical profession, for even the profession and not a few medical students contribute a share of this large death-rate. The movement proposes to fight the tuberculosis germ by proper sanitary measures, and by the isolation of those who have contracted the disease. Public confidence and interest in this proposition are increasing. Why? It will save or help in saving the lives of so many thousand people annually in Canada, and will conserve population. So also, we claim, the prohibition of the liquor traffic would save the lives of a much larger number of people in our country, and with much less expense and greater economic results.

"I do not think anyone present will deny that the traffic is a fruitful source of wrongdoing and crime. One of our most influential public men, whose large experience in law gave every necessary opportunity to investigate this matter, has declared that three-fourths of the crime and wrong-doing of our country is due to intemperance; yet, as matters now stand with us, every citizen who votes must have thrust back upon him a certain complicity in the making of wrongdoers and the perpetuation of crime, for we are represented by the legislatures who continue the traffic. We have not taken care to send men to parliament whom we believed would take steps to abolish it, and to this, to a great extent, may be traced that shifting indifference of parliament that my colleague has pointed out to you.

"Judging from the way in which parliaments have treated the prohibition question, and the petitions presented to them by the electors interested in the temperance cause, one would be led to suppose that the country existed for the parliament, and not the parliament for the country. Nevertheless, the fact remains, that so long as the electorate make no effort to abolish the traffic, they participate in the responsibility for the crimes that must be laid to its account. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation' is a principle that never fails, and all history testifies to this; for the facts of history show that all the great nations of antiquity have fallen through some vice peculiar to that nation, which has eaten into its vitals and drained its life-blood. The great vice of the Anglo-

Saxon nations is the use of intoxicating liquors, and we will be no exception to other nations unless we desist from it. It is gradually eating into the heart of the nation and sapping its vital forces.

“Here, perhaps, we may be met with the objection that we cannot make citizens sober by Act of parliament; but to say this is to attempt to credit temperance people with an assumption they do not make, nor have they ever done so. We do claim that by enacting and enforcing prohibitory laws we can remove the cause of drunkenness, and if the cause be removed the effect must, of necessity, be absent. If the trade in intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes were once prohibited by Act of parliament, liquor could not be sold, and intoxication, with all its attendant and resulting crimes and wrongdoing, will disappear. To argue the opposite is to abandon reason and those methods of thought by which we are governed and proceed in all affairs of life. This will serve me for an illustration: You do not make your children scholars by Act of parliament. No; but all those necessary and preliminary steps to the child’s education are taken—school sections are determined; school-houses are built; school-teachers are qualified and their support guaranteed; certain books are authorized, and all parents and guardians are compelled to send their children to school a certain number of months each year. The whole is embodied in Acts of parliament, and the education of children follows as a sequence. Yet no one claims we educate them by Act of parliament.”

"We claim the same for the Act of parliament by which the liquor traffic may be prohibited. In both the law is the efficient and provident cause. In one case the result is the education of the children ; in the other, the sobriety of citizens ; and each in its place makes for the welfare of the people of Canada. Prohibitory law would, therefore, be a good thing for us. We do not say that such a law would never be broken, since all laws are broken ; and it may even be said that it is the existence of some wrong or crime, which, in the first place, makes the law necessary. The laws against murder, theft, arson, perjury, are all at times broken ; but we do not on that account sweep them from our statute books, but rather endeavor to enforce them, knowing as we do, that the welfare of society depends on their enforcement, and the foundation of true liberty is the recognition of law. The license laws of this country are broken at times, yet the liquor men would be content to proceed with their business under license law. The possibility of a prohibitory law being at times broken by lawless men, cannot therefore be held as a valid objection to such a measure being passed, since the same may be urged against any law, or all laws—the license law for instance.

"Let it be observed, further, that the law is not for those who keep it, but for the lawless. To attempt to dissuade the electorate from demanding that a prohibitory law be passed, by arguing that it will be broken, or that it cannot be enforced, is attempting to intimidate temperance people by the fear of law-

less men. It therefore resolves itself into this question: Shall this country be controlled by the very small minority of lawless men, who would treat prohibitory law with contempt, or by the law-abiding majority, who, through their representatives, shall enact prohibition? Shall we submit to minority rule, or shall we adhere to the ancient principle of British government and British liberty—majority rule? I think you will have no hesitation in answering that the majority must still rule. I hold it is both unpatriotic and un-British to set up the cry that prohibition could not be enforced. Do we not know that every British law, be it in the remotest part of the Empire, is backed up by the whole might of that Empire, and must be enforced. It is not a question of voluntary compliance; it is an absolute requirement that each and all submit to the will of the majority.

“There seem to be very few who realize that prohibitory law is already in force over the great majority of our Canadian people. Taking Ontario as an example, licenses are issued on an average of one for every five hundred persons, which means that the license law allows only one person in five hundred to sell liquor, and prohibits four hundred and ninety-nine from doing so. That law is sometimes broken; but when this occurs, not once in ten times is it done by any of these four hundred and ninety-nine whom it prohibits, but by the one to whom the license has been given, and who is not satisfied to confine his operations to the time limits and conditions specified by the law. These facts furnish a strong probability that prohibi-

tory law would be as well observed by the people of Canada as any law on the statute book. In prohibition we would only extend the power we now exercise over four hundred and ninety-nine to the other person, and prohibit him also from selling liquor as a beverage. What I wish you to observe and remember is, that nearly all of us are already under prohibitory law, so far as the sale of liquor is concerned, and all that is now necessary is a proper extension of the controlling and prohibitory power our legislature is already exercising.

“ I am also well aware that liquor men, in pleading for the continuance of their trade, say, ‘ We are pursuing a legitimate business. We break no law ; let us alone ! ’ This latter is an old request. If I remember right, it was the request of evil spirits eighteen centuries ago. ‘ Let us alone ; what have we to do with thee ? ’ and as I recall it, I cannot but think those same spirits may have had something to do with advancing the plea on behalf of this traffic, for we detect a very peculiar kinship and method of procedure. But do not be deceived by the use of the term ‘ legitimate.’ Anything permitted by civil law is ‘ legitimate,’ but it does not follow that it is right. There was a time when it was ‘ legitimate ’ to burn people for witchcraft, to hang children of tender years for theft. Such things are not legitimate now, and this consideration will also show that the legitimacy of certain things may pass away as society makes advancement, and as moral standards of life rise many things disappear that were once considered legitimate. So it is in

regard to the liquor traffic. It is legitimate only because our laws permit its continuance; but we must never suppose such legitimacy makes it right, or entitles it to a place among those vocations and industries of our land that build up our wealth, and therefore ought to continue. Just so soon as a prohibitory law is enacted will the traffic become illegitimate and lose its legal recognition, as it has already lost its character of respectability."

In this last remark, Dr. Sam meant only to state a fact, but Hedley took it to himself, and blushed a deep crimson, which did not escape the notice of the audience.

"If my time will permit," continued Dr. Sam, "I shall use one more argument to show that the liquor traffic is opposed to our national progress and welfare."

"You have fifteen minutes at your disposal," replied Mr. Minnes, and Dr. Sam plunged again into his address.

"The liquor traffic is the great destroyer of national wealth, as I shall now show you. As to the revenue of something like seven million dollars derived from it, and which we are told would be lost if we adopted prohibition, it does not really come from the liquor trade, but from those who consume the liquor. It is really the small percentage which the liquor men pay to the government out of the profits made in their business. The actual cost to the consumers is fully thirty-eight millions, which sum is collected by men in the traffic from drinkers, and they hand the Government less than twenty per cent.

of what they receive, retaining more than thirty millions of the people's money. Who, then, pays this revenue? Certainly not the liquor man, but those who consume the liquor; and this great parasite claims more than eighty per cent. of the profits that come from the trade. If I am told that the same might be said concerning other lines of import and manufacture, I answer that other lines bring to us the necessities and conveniences of life, which supply our wants, and so equip us that we are the better prepared to become wealth producers. But it is just the opposite with the traffic in strong drink. It takes away what we have; it adds nothing to us. And I have further been informed, on reliable authority, that the question of revenue has not emanated from Government circles, but from liquor men, and as such is designed to throw dust in the eyes of the people, from whose honest earnings they are filching immense annual incomes, that are so largely enriching certain of their number. In contrast with the sophistries of these men, whose whole interest is in the traffic, I shall ask you to listen to the opinion of W. E. Gladstone: 'Gentlemen, you need not give yourselves any trouble about the revenue. The question of revenue must never stand in the way of needed reforms. Besides, with a sober population, not wasting their earnings, I shall know where to obtain the revenue.'"

Many eyes were now looking at Hedley, who winced under Dr. Sam's hailstorm of statistical argu-

ments, for the address was coming closely home to the inmates of "The Briton's Lodge." They were surprised, also, to observe that Terry had moved from the platform and could not be seen; but they were recalled by another statement from the speaker on the same line of thought:

"It is also a fact, that may be proven by the census returns of the Dominion, that the manufacture of liquor does not give anything like the same amount of employment to laboring men that is given by industry in general. In the liquor trade, for every million dollars invested, about ninety men are employed; in other industries about one thousand and forty find employment to the million dollars invested; and four times as large an amount is paid to them in wages as is paid from the same amount invested in the liquor trade. It is true, as you will see, that the average salary in the liquor trade is larger, but this is because so few persons are required to carry on a comparatively large and lucrative enterprise, and hence a larger share of the profits, in the form of wages, comes to those employed in it. We are a nation of laborers, and it is vastly more to the nation's welfare to employ ten times as many workers and keep them sober, although we may distribute among them, in the form of wages, a smaller amount of profits. But you may see how the liquor trade has locked up its millions in the manufacture of drink, that prohibition would drive out of this trade and into other lines of industry that would do

so much more for laboring people, both in employment and wages, not to speak of relieving so many of them from the habit of drink.

“This is only the beginning of the evil and the expense annually to this nation; for to reach the total we must also take into account the cost of asylums, reformatories, almshouses; the expenditure on police and the administration of justice, prisons and penitentiaries—one-half of which, at least, is due to the liquor traffic. We must also reckon on the loss of labor, not less than eight per cent. of the total, which would be, perhaps, seventy-five millions annually. To this must be added the value of the lives that are shortened on account of increased mortality caused by drink, a loss of ten years at least on every drinker. All these considerations must enter into our decision of the great question, as to whether the liquor traffic is detrimental to the interests of this young nation or not. In all of these estimates I say nothing of those other things that enter upon the more hidden side of this traffic, and which cannot be set down in this manner. I say nothing of the blighted homes, the hungry children, the broken hearts, the crazed brain, the darkened intellects; nor the souls that pass away from the raving delirium out into eternal night, the blackness and darkness that will never be lifted !”

Here Dr. Sam’s voice swelled in volume that reached far beyond the capacity of the school-house. Out through the open windows it rang, till the loungers on the platform of “The Briton’s Lodge” heard

distinctly every word of the peroration, in which he caught up the audience and carried them away on the wings of inspired hope, to look upon his word-picture of a Canadian people free from the blight of intemperance, and increasing their prosperity in the pure atmosphere of national sobriety. He was not debating now ; he was pleading.

“ It is in no spirit of prejudice (although I have more reason than most of you for such a feeling), but from careful investigation of the whole question, that I declare that one redeeming feature cannot be found in the liquor traffic ! No, not one ! It is evil and only evil ; a curse and only a curse ! It hinders, and never helps, a nation’s prosperity. Its work is to tempt, to weaken, to degrade, to blight and to destroy the best hopes and best prospects of men for time and for eternity. I have, indeed, heard of a certain large and wealthy brewer who has given some thousands of dollars to orphans’ homes and to public libraries. But can these paltry donations atone for the orphans which his traffic has made fatherless, and for the intellects turned to hopeless night, by the maddening fire of intoxicants poured from his mills of destruction ? Not for one of them ! How much less, then, for the thousands who have fallen ! Such men only use their donations as a cover for their crimes against society ; and, unfortunately, there are churches that will accept such bribes, and permit the iniquities of the traffic to be glazed over with such false expressions of humility and deceitful symbols of philanthropy. Such men have neither part nor lot

in the elevation of men and the amelioration of human sorrow. Theirs is the opposite work—the degradation of the bodies and the damnation of the souls of men. Let them know it; or, if they know it, let them be told it again, in the burning words of a Christian spirit, indignant at the brazen presumption of these ghouls of human destruction. There is need for a revival of that stern apostolic spirit of noble and fearless independence, that will say to such men, ‘Thy money perish with thee, because thou thinkest that the gift of God can be purchased with money !’

“This social condition is passing, however, and the end will come ; come, perhaps, sooner than some are expecting. I have faith in the future of our country, and in the genius and spirit of our citizens. I believe Canada has been, in the providence of God, reserved for a great nation—reserved to be the home of a great people ; a people whose greatest greatness will be the peaceable fruits of righteousness. This evil among us now must pass ; for the moral sense of the rising generation will not tolerate that which is such a fruitful source of cruelty, oppression, injustice and immorality. It will be cast out as a thing unfit for the abode of men and women seeking righteousness. God is with us, and on this I take my firm stand, and who shall move me ? Wrong must flee before the brightness of His coming as the darkness gives place to the glory of the morning. On this great question we shall each have to take our stand ;

and I speak for myself when I say, that while this heart beats, while this tongue can articulate words, while this voice can utter sentences, while this frame throbs with the pulsation of intellectual and physical life—I, Samuel Martin, shall never cease to condemn the iniquities, to protest against the injustice, and to plead and work for the prohibition of the liquor traffic!"

VII.

THE FIRST-FRUTS.

DR. SAM had finished, and resumed his seat. A hush was upon the audience like the hush of a forest silence on a summer day, and they continued to look at where the speaker had stood. Many of them had leaned toward him unconsciously, as he carried them onward by his magnificent oratory, and the interest had increased as he advanced. Many of the facts he had presented they had heard before, but they had not heard Dr. Sam, in his own unique style, state them before.

Arthur could not restrain himself any longer. He sprang up, and moving over to Dr. Sam, grasped his hand. "Shake, old fellow!" he cried in a boyish ecstasy of enthusiasm. The spell was broken and the audience rose as one man and cheered as though they would raise the roof of the old school-house! Again and again the cheers arose, and swelled away past "The Briton's Lodge" to the distant forest, that appeared to express its sympathy by sending back a ringing echo. Then there was a movement forward to get hold of Dr. Sam's hands, but the speaker called to them loudly to remain seated. "There is one more speaker," said he, "and we must give a fair hearing

to both sides. I now call upon Mr. Terrence Varro to address you." The audience fell back, and looked about for Terry, but he could not be seen.

"We cannot wait," said Mr. Minnes rising. "If this speaker wishes to employ his time, let him come forward or we shall proceed." No Terry appeared.

"He's skipped off home," called a voice from the outside.

"Then I shall call upon Mr. Medford to make his reply of ten minutes, if he desires."

Arthur arose, and said he did not think any reply necessary. He might have said there was nothing to reply to, but he spared Hedley.

"The audience must now decide by a standing vote which side shall receive the decision. Vote on the affirmative first," and as he spoke three-fourths of the audience arose.

"The affirmative has the decision," said the Speaker, "and the Burke Society will now adjourn to meet at the call of the chair some time in January. Almost before the audience were aware, the business-like speaker had dismissed the meeting and had left the chair. They now gave vent to their enthusiasm in cheer after cheer for the victorious speakers, and finally gave three prolonged cheers for prohibition. If Arthur and Dr. Sam had not offered a mild protest, the young men would have carried them on their shoulders down past the tavern.

Neil McNair had listened with wrapt attention to both, and when he could reach Arthur and Dr. Sam, he grasped their hands :

"Oh, but it was grand, lads, it was grand," said the old man. "I never saw the thing in that licht before; ye ha' dune a power o' guid th' nicht, and ye ha' dune me good. Aye, it was fine! Ye maun ha' gaen it a lot of stody to mak' thae addresses. It's as guid as a half dozen sermons, comin' frae ye twa brae lads."

"Thanks, Neil," said Arthur, "but do not praise us too much or you'll turn our heads with pride."

"Niver fear," replied Neil. "It's no sa easy to turn thae twa heeds," and he held up an incredulous hand, which already was grasping a short black pipe. Then he went home, enjoying a smoke by the way, and pleasant cogitations over the magnificent addresses of "the lads."

But Terry! what of him? He had listened to Dr. Sam for about twenty minutes, and by that time he was convinced that there was no chance to win the debate. He knew he was not capable of an effort that would offset that address even creditably, and besides, he was none too well pleased at Hedley for bringing him out to match two clever fellows like these. "These are no common dumpheads," he said to himself. "The fool should have known better than to tackle them." To give Hedley the "slip" he deemed no unfair retaliation, so, under the pretence of smoking a cigarette to steady his nerves, he slipped into the anteroom. A well-understood wink was passed from one to another of his company and before many minutes all were outside with those who had not been able to get in. They started for the

tavern, and while Terry and three others got out the horses, the rest of the party went inside and kept Dave employed in preparing drinks until the cabs stood outside the door. By the time Dr. Sam had finished his address the whole party were entering the next hotel three miles down the road toward home. Here Terry ordered luncheon for all and entertained his friends for three hours longer. As an "after dinner" speech he rehearsed Hedley's address in the school-house, ending the burlesque by a supposed fainting spell, amid roars of laughter from those who were eating and drinking at his expense.

Rev. Hiram Stafford had listened to the debate and had seen the first-fruits of the seeds he had planted that evening in the parsonage. Perhaps he did not realize it as he drove his daughters homeward, but he found a conviction stealing in upon his mind that a new day was dawning upon the Dominion, when two rural youths could give expression to such decided sentiments, could present an array of facts, figures, and arguments, that even a much more learned and dignified audience might listen to with interest. These young men must be expressing the leaven of sentiment that was spreading, and that would arise in all the majesty and strength of virtuous manhood to cast out the abominations of the liquor traffic from the land. Then he wondered if the political leaders of the day would have the wisdom to apprehend this growing spirit and endeavor to guide it to its proper issue in prohibitory legislation; or would they blindly resist it in a futile effort to gain the support of the

liquor party. Would history repeat itself again, and would these foolish leaders allow themselves to be thrown off and cast out by a determined electorate, who should insist on having their moral convictions respected, and their just demands granted ?

Marion was not talkative on the way home. She was apparently engaged with her own thoughts. It might be interesting to know what those thoughts were, if it had only been thoughts that engrossed her attention ; but beneath her thoughts there were feelings. She was conscious of a new emotion to-night, that almost alarmed her.

Marion loved the majestic and the sublime. Many a time she had stood to watch the glory of a sunset breaking through banks of storm clouds, or the oncoming of the storm, with crashes of thunder, through a flaming sky ; the supernal glory of the snow-crowned mountain, or the swell of the incoming tide. These were among the things that moved her spirit with deepest feelings.

Dr. Sam had risen up before Marion to-night as a man of strong individuality, with a bold, irresistible spirit. She had noted in detail his address, and the manner in which he had presented himself to-night had struck a chord in her soul that had never vibrated before. His whole attitude this evening had captivated her. She knew not whether it was a sorrow or a joy she felt, as she more than once pressed her hand upon her heart and whispered to that heart, "I must not ; he belongs to Kate." As often as she put the vision from her it came back to her again.

She was glad when they reached home, so that she might bury her emotion in the quiet of her own chamber. There she wept—she knew not why.

Hedley V. Stenson's steps homeward that night were "by way of the valley." He was mortified beyond expression at his failure. He had to remember that he had given the challenge. His mother had urged him on in the matter. In her folly she had attended the debate to see Dr. Sam "tramped in the dirt." Instead, she had listened to his convincing address and had heard him cheered to the echo, after her son had sat down in confusion and shame.

Dave Stenson said very little to his son about the debate. He had begun to meditate on another plan by which he might get rid of this troublesome school-teacher, who was crossing his own and his wife's plans in so many ways. When the plot was matured he took Hedley into his confidence, and found him willing to participate.

Mrs. Stenson's colored domestic had decided to marry, and after her departure she was not able to secure another. Mary Munroe had remained with her for a few weeks after the accident almost from a sense of obligation. But Mary soon became aware of the fact that Mrs. Stenson had not given up her design of securing a wife for Hedley, and that she was trying to weave the thin threads of courtship about herself. Mary could not allow this to go on, so she quietly and forever left the place. The evening of the debate, after Jack McNair had shaken hands with Arthur and Dr. Sam, he was seen leaving the school-house in company with Mary Munroe.

Half an hour after the debate closed, Dr. Sam, Arthur, Kate and Joker sat around the table in the dining-room at the "Old Orchard." Mrs. Medford had waited for them, and was delighted to hear of their success from Joker, who had reached home first. He had signalized victory by a loud whoop when he stepped in the door; nor could he find words to praise sufficiently what "the boys" had done that evening.

After a cup of coffee, Joker requested them to excuse Dr. Sam for a few minutes, and then he led the latter up to his room, where they spent about fifteen minutes together, after which Dr. Sam returned alone to the dining-room. Joker had revealed a secret to Dr. Sam, which was as follows: Some days after Joker had won the prize in the writing-class he received a request through *Minerva Days*-more to call again on Mr. Robbs, which he had done. It had occurred to Mr. Robbs that, since Joker had made such progress in penmanship, he would be a suitable person to write his obituary. Joker had agreed to do so, and had received from Mr. Robbs the necessary data for the preparation of so important a document. He had shown Dr. Sam the first copy of it this evening. Dr. Sam had suggested certain grammatical changes, and Joker set to work to prepare a new and final copy.

When Dr. Sam finally rose to depart, Kate accompanied him to the door. There he paused.

"Your address to-night was splendid, Sam," said Kate. "I always considered you clever. You know

we all do. You have compelled us to think so. But you excelled yourself to-night. I think everyone present thought so, too."

"Thank you, Kate," replied Dr. Sam. "I am delighted to know that you think anything good of me. You know we esteem the opinions of some people much more than of others. I have always shrunk a little from the public, fearing they might—well, because of what they know of our home."

"O Sam, you surely do not think I would despise you, because of your mother," cried Kate. "I cannot tell you how I have longed to be able to do something for her. You certainly have my deepest sympathy, and your own noble stand for temperance has lifted you much higher in my esteem, I assure you."

He was looking into her deep black eyes, now full of the holiest emotion, and his own were speaking responsively the deep feeling of his soul. Once and again a sentence rose up for expression, but he did not utter it. Instead of it he said, "I believe you, Kate. I have always believed that. I know you are too good and true to think evil of anyone. I believe you care for—for my success. Knowing this has made brighter many an hour that might have been very dark with me, if I had not believed in your goodness."

He had extended his hand as he spoke. Another word, not "goodness," but a word that comprehended goodness, had trembled on his lips, but he used this substitute.

Then Kate said, "Before you go, I wanted to ask

you whether you think I could do anything for the cause of temperance reform. Your address was a revelation to me. I never saw the magnitude of the work as I did to-night. And yet, what am I doing for it? I would like to do something. It appears to me there is a great world that needs help lying outside of my life, that I do not know much about yet. Can you show me some way or point me to some plan by which I might help that great outside world?"

"I think it would be impossible for me to lay down any ready-made plan for you to follow," replied Dr. Sam, "but I may say this, Kate: Always be true. Opportunities will come to you, plans will unfold. I am sure that those young women who are willing to step into the places that open shall have a large part in the great social reformation that is upon us. Persons who influence others, as virtuous young ladies do must, certainly have a work to do."

Kate smiled as she said, "I wish I knew I had influenced some life for good in any degree. It would be such a satisfaction."

They were still standing with hands clasped. Kate felt her hand pressed a little harder as Dr. Sam said, "Then let me give you the satisfaction you long for, Kate. You have influenced my life. You have done me good to-night, and my life shall be brighter for what you have said."

"I did not know I had said anything to help you, Dr. Sam," replied Kate; "but I shall remember your advice, and as far as I may be able, I will 'always be true.'"

Kate Medford and Dr. Sam were standing upon the shore of that boundless sea, whose waters are always blue and placid to young lovers. They did not speak of the sea, but these little exchanges of sentiment and mutual interest were as the wavelets that chase one another along the sands, and whisper to the heart of those illimitable depths that lie beyond.

Will the same barque bear these two young hearts outwards ?

VIII.

THE VALUE OF A RELIGIOUS IDEAL.

A WEEK from the Saturday after the great debate Dr. Sam called at the parsonage to return "Alexander's Temperance Lectures," a book of Mr. Stafford's, which he had borrowed when preparing his address. He found Marion alone, as Mr. Stafford and Lucinda had gone to the city early that morning. Marion ushered him into the study and began the conversation by congratulating him on the excellence of his address in the debate. They had conversed only a few minutes when two men were observed driving up to the gate. The two were Mr. Pilling and Mr. Longe. In appearance they were opposites. Mr. Pilling was small, of light complexion, with a wizen face—a morsel of humanity, with a soul and mind to correspond; a creature who had never known the nobler instincts of manhood. Mr. Longe was tall and well-built, of dark complexion, long face, long, dark beard turning gray, and glittering black, restless eyes. Longe might have made a success of farming had he remained at it, but he had given up that calling and had taken up a dozen other things in succession, finally going into insolvency. His slow voice suited well his weak brain and slow-moving body.

When Dr. Sam saw them he was afraid they meditated no good. Mr. Pilling was the only one who had opposed Longfellow's presence about the school, and he had shown extreme sympathy with Mr. and Mrs. Stenson, even in opposition to Mr. Stafford. Evidently he had succeeded in winning over Mr. Longe, and Mrs. Stenson had made her final "play" in appealing to them.

"Do not reveal yourself," said Marion to Dr. Sam in a half whisper, as she went out.

"I will have to take you into the dining-room, as there is no fire in the parlor," she said, as she led them from the hall.

Dr. Sam could not be seen by either of the men where he was sitting. He was silently glancing through another book which he had taken down.

"This room is all right, Miss Stafford," returned Mr. Pilling, speaking in a contracted, jerky voice, as he seated himself. Generally he had addressed her as "Marion." Then he asked:

"Is Mr. Stafford at home?"

"He went to the city early this morning," replied Marion, "and he may be home about noon. He would pass your place. It is a wonder you did not see him."

Mr. Pilling had seen him, but he did not answer. Mr. Longe, in reply to Marion's remark, said evasively, "You say he went early? I thought I saw a roan horse go past, but it might not have been his."

"We called," broke in Mr. Pilling, not desiring to

give Marion any further opportunity to question, “to see Mr. Stafford—ahem !” Here he cleared his jerky voice vigorously, and drew a long breath to steady himself and make the most of his meagre proportions. Marion detected a tremor in his voice. Then he resumed :

“ You know he has had some difficulty with Mrs. Stenson,” looking at Marion.

“ I have not heard of any difficulty with Mrs. Stenson,” replied Marion, “ beyond the fact that she withdrew her name from the church and gave my father no reason for doing so.”

“ That’s just it,” put in Mr. Longe.

“ Just so,” said Mr. Pilling also. “ He insulted Mrs. Stenson in his sermon, and——” But Marion stopped him. “ Excuse me, Mr. Pilling, my father did not insult anyone in any sermon he has ever preached in Bellheath Church. Do you mean to say that he does not know what is becoming to a gentleman and a Christian minister ? ”

“ Oh, certainly not, Miss Stafford,” replied Mr. Pilling ; “ but she took offence at what he said.”

“ That is another and a very different thing,” said Marion. “ Father spoke the truth in the sermon you refer to. I was present. If Mrs. Stenson took offence at the truth, then she cannot be seeking the truth. It becomes plain, then, that she desires to have the truth suppressed. But if she, or you, or anyone else in the congregation expects my father to withhold the truth, you will be disappointed.”

“ Indeed ! ” ejaculated Mr. Longe, speaking the

word as rapidly as might be expected from him. "I think you misunderstood Mr. Pilling. There is no one likes the truth, and the whole truth, better than Mr. Pilling and myself."

"Then, why do you call to expostulate with my father because he has spoken the truth concerning the liquor traffic?" asked Marion.

"That is all right, Miss Stafford," returned Mr. Pilling, turning his wizened face toward her and reaching out his right hand before him. "We know your father told the truth, but you see we have to be careful as to how and when and where we tell the truth, especially in a case of this kind."

"Mr. Pilling!" exclaimed Marion. "O, Mr. Pilling! Has it come to this with you? You ought to blush for shame to be heard making such a statement. Is that the doctrine of truth you impart to your Sunday School class? I am ashamed of you!"

"What I mean is this," said Mr. Pilling, wincing, "you see we have received a good deal of help from the Stensons. They paid two dollars a month to the church and always helped us in the Sunday School besides, and now we are going to lose all that."

"I know what you mean," cried Marion in hot indignation, "and you mean more than you have expressed. Tell me, did the business of these people through the week help the church? Were the boys of the Sunday School made more pure by going to their bar-room through the week? Take their own son as an example: what has their business done for him?"

As the conversation proceeded, Dr. Sam had read with his eyes, but his ears were on the dialogue in the dining-room. Soon his eyes were lifted and slowly the book closed. He was sitting now with one arm on the writing-desk, leaning forward like a man ready to start up, and he was trembling with indignation. This man Pilling! A bible class teacher, and talking in such a manner! Dr. Sam could have caught the miserable craven by the neck and hurled him into the middle of the road. Ought he to remain concealed, he asked himself once, even though Marion had made the request? But he was sure Marion was more than equal to the occasion, and the defeat of these time-serving fellows would be made all the more humiliating.

As Marion put her last question, the two men looked at each other. Then Mr. Longe said: "You know, Miss Marion, that Mr. Stafford's support has to be provided by the congregation. This is a hard year, but as it is his last year with us, we would like to see him receive his salary in full.

"I am not sure that I do know all the things you mention," replied Marion; "but one thing I know, and both of you gentlemen know it also, that since my father came here, no money from the Stensons has gone into his salary. He notified the officials that he would not receive support from persons engaged in the liquor trade. Whatever money Mrs. Stenson may have paid, the trustees have had the pleasure and responsibility of handling it, for none of it came to our support."

"Oh, it is all the same," said Mr. Longe.

"Excuse me," said Marion, "it is not all the same, as I look upon it. It is different to this extent: The responsibility of taking money from the liquor traffic rests entirely with the officials, who have been willing to receive it, and my father is clear. He regards it as one of the crucial questions of the life of the church, and he has resolved never to accept a dollar of money made in the liquor trade, because it is the price of blood. If that is what you called to see him about, I can answer for him, for I know his mind. Lucinda and I are both with him. We would rather that he should be deficient by one-half of his salary than that it should come from such a source."

"What harm, what possible harm can there be in receiving money from them? That is what I want to know," said Mr. Pilling impatiently.

"If you take their money," replied Marion, "you make yourself a partaker in their sin. Besides, if you take their money, they look for you to keep silent about the iniquities of the traffic. Indeed, I cannot see how any minister can consistently preach against the liquor traffic who consents to receive some of his support from it. Such a man is a partaker of the sin to that same extent. On the other hand, where liquor people are in the church, they are certain to take offence at the minister who does his duty in speaking against this great moral and social wrong. That is what is troubling Mrs. Stenson. She wants to enjoy the ease, comfort and profits of a sinful business, and she wants heaven at the end of it all. My

father cannot lead her to think that she shall find it as she desires."

"Well, Mr. Stafford has raised too much of a hullaballoo about the liquor business," said Mr. Pilling, now quite angry. "There is too much preaching against liquor and such like things nowadays anyway. Ministers ought to stick to the gospel and let liquor alone. It's more of the blessed gospel we need. The church is dying for sermons on the true gospel."

"I think we might have a great deal more of the preaching you appear to desire, and profit by it, too. In preaching such sermons, my father is preaching gospel sermons. If Christ were upon earth he would preach against the liquor traffic also. Since you know so much about a gospel sermon, tell me, what do you call gospel?" said Marion. But Mr. Pilling gave no definition.

Then Mr. Longe put in a word. "Why, Miss Marion, Dave Stenson was always kind to the preachers before Mr. Stafford came. He used always to send them a fat fowl at Christmas, and they used to visit him and take dinner or tea."

"That's so," said Mr. Pilling, "and Dave isn't a bad fellow at all, and would do the same yet if he was only visited right. I never saw anything wrong in him, so I didn't."

"It is not the first time we have heard about those fat fowl," replied Marion, scornfully, "but we desire none of his gifts. As for visiting him, and trying to save him, let him do what is in his power toward his own salvation and come out from the business. No

amount of visiting with the family in the way you mention will ever do them the least good. I believe such social intercourse would do harm. I know quite well that liquor people desire to be recognized by the church. It adds the appearance of respectability to their infamous business, and they are willing to pay well, or even to give presents, to propitiate for such recognition ; but my father has never done so with them, and he never will."

" Well, Brother Longe," said Mr. Pilling, rising and speaking in an injured tone ; " we may as well go. I am sorry we did not find Mr. Stafford at home. Will you tell him we called and also the nature of our business ?" he asked, looking towards Marion.

" Why did you not speak to him yourself this morning when you saw him ?" she asked, in return, looking sharply at Mr. Pilling.

" Who said I saw him ?" was his reply.

" Did you, or did you not, see him ?" asked Marion, looking down into his eyes. But he made no reply, and turned away his face. Then she went on :

" I knew from the first that you saw him this morning, and you thought it was I and not Lucinda who was with him. You came here to pour out your complaints to my sister, whom you thought would receive them more patiently than I. Now, I will answer you : Not one word of all you have said to me will I tell my father. I will not disturb him with the complaints of such unprincipled men. You are here as the spokesmen of Mrs. Stenson, but you must not suppose that I am going to class myself

with you and her by passing over your complaints to my father. If you desire to degrade yourselves any further by doing so, then speak to him. If you wish you may inform Mrs. Stenson that we feel entirely independent of her, and we have no reason to expect that the work of the church will not move along without her. So far as she and her husband are concerned, their absence is more acceptable than the odor of their presence. If she contemplates giving some presents of fat fowl this year, they would be more appropriately bestowed upon some of the families whose money has gone for drink at her bar."

The two men were moving toward the door as Marion's last scorching words fell on their ears. They only said a quiet "Good morning," and stole away like whipped kittens.

Some listeners might have been amused at what Dr. Sam heard, but he was far too deeply moved to feel that way. The question which Marion had been so bravely defending was too profoundly serious to be a matter of amusement; and the attitude of these two men indicated a feature of the religious life that was of vast importance. His soul was heaving with indignation, like a troubled sea. Every sentence the young woman had uttered she had spoken to his heart. When Marion came into the study again she observed his unusual excitement.

"I am sorry," he began, "that you requested me to remain here. I could scarcely keep your command."

"I am much better pleased that you did not come out," replied Marion. "I know Mr. Pilling well, and

I suspected what he was after. It was he who left the church, making so much noise, the Sunday my father preached the sermon he referred to. For Mr. Longe, he is too childish to be taken notice of, and he would not have been here but for Mr. Pilling. I thought it might better be settled to-day than at some later time, and have those men giving pa more trouble."

"Well, I think Mr. Stafford will hear no more of the matter," answered Dr. Sam.

"Was I too severe with them?" asked Marion.

"Not in the least," replied Dr. Sam. "If I had been speaking to them I would have put matters stronger, if possible, to Mr. Pilling especially. But your replies were not prompted by the spirit of the moment."

"They were in part, but not wholly," answered Marion. "Of course I have lived in the same atmosphere as my father. You know what that means. My best judgment approves of the stand he takes on the temperance question, and I do not expect that I shall ever change my views. As a minister of Christ I do not see how he could take any other stand and be true to his high calling. It may not be good policy as men consider policy. He has lost money by it, and he may do so again. But it is truth, both in profession and practice, and it is right. That settles the matter for my father and for me also. Mr. Pilling's words to-day, however, are not without a certain significance, but an evil one. We have found others like him—men who would have the church

suppress truth and ignore moral principle for the gain of a few dollars from the liquor trade. I fail to understand how Christian people who have had such pure and noble religious ideals held up to them, and inculcated in sermon and Sunday School lesson throughout life, can deflect so far and so ignobly from them. Look at this—”

Reaching to the bookcase she took out an old brown leather-covered volume of “Wesley’s Sermons,” and turning to his sermon on “Money,” she read :

“‘ Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbor in his body. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire commonly called drams or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine ; they may be of use in some bodily disorders, although there would rarely be occasion for them were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner. Therefore such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they ? Who prepare them only for this end ? Do you know of ten such distillers in England ? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners-general. They murder His Majesty’s subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain ? Is it not the blood of these men ? Who, then, would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces ? A curse is in the midst of them—the curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of

them ! The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves—a fire that burns to the nethermost hell ! Blood, blood is there—the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood ! And canst thou hope, oh, thou man of blood, though thou art clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day ; canst thou hope to deliver down thy *fields of blood* to the third generation ? Not so ; for there is a God in heaven ; therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed body and soul, thy memorial shall perish with thee ! ”

Laying down the book again, she said : “ There is the religious and ethical ideal which our people have had before them. I believe it has been faithfully presented to them. It is six years since I first read those words, and they have never left me. How can Christian people who have had such teaching be willing to take what is there truly described as the gain of ‘ blood,’ and expect a divine blessing to follow them ? ”

Dr. Sam saw, or thought he saw, his own zeal surpassed in this young woman’s. It appeared to him, also, that the strain on Marion had been too great, and it would be better to leave her alone.

“ I am glad that I called this morning,” he said, as he rose to go, and then extended his hand. “ Do not worry over what has been said to you to-day. I fully agree with every word you have said, and I heartily congratulate you on the noble stand you have taken. It is deserving of far better praise than I can speak.”

When her beautiful hand clasped his, their souls mingled, and each received something from the other. Dr. Sam could have drawn her to his heart and kissed the lips that were quivering with a silent emotion. Every word of his had sunk into her heart. Praise! They were more than praise to Marion.

When he was gone, her over-wrought feelings gave way, and she wept a great flood of tears. Whether they were tears of joy or tears of sorrow, they brought her relief; and when Lucinda and Mr. Stafford returned, Marion was bright and beautiful as in the morning.

Book IV.

INGATHERING.

I.

FINDING A FATHER.

At the urgent request of Mrs. Blackrock, when Mrs. Medford had last called on her, Kate went to spend a week with her. The bed-chamber off the private parlor on the second floor had been furnished in a style which might have given the impression that it awaited the coming of a princess. This room was assigned to Kate for the time of her visit, and the private parlor was warmed every day and lighted at night. Across the hall from the parlor was Mrs. Blackrock's own bedroom.

Jerry Blackrock did not talk much with Kate. He was distant and appeared to have a frightened look. The second evening of her visit he retired early to a room over the kitchen, and Kate and Mrs. Blackrock spent the evening in the private parlor. They retired each to their separate apartments at about the usual hour. Sometime through the night, Kate was awak-

ened by a noise in the parlor like a man's voice. It was Jerry ; and as she listened the muttering became distinct and articulate enough for her to understand.

"Yes, I'm guilty," he said, as if answering a question. "I stole her away." Then there was a pause.

"This iron is cold," he began again, and Kate heard his hand moving over some surface ; "and it is heavy, heavy." Again a pause. "I deserve it all. Yes, I took the diamonds, too, and sold them to a cursed Jew. He cheated me one half. I know it. Curse his money ! It has cursed me. Calder told me he had done up Longfellow and I paid him, too. I'm as bad as any murderer." He paused, and again Kate heard his hand moving over some surface. "I stole Katie away, and I have kept all of their money for myself, and worse than all, was to part Katie from her father."

As Kate heard these words, it seemed to her that her heart stood still. She became like one paralyzed. A chill crept through her body. She could not move nor cry. The voice went on :

"I was afraid it would come out some day. He has found me out. He must know Katie ; I've always had a fear that he might come back. So he has, and I'm found out. Now, there you know it all. It's out."

The last words were spoken so loudly that even Mrs. Blackrock across the hall might have heard them. He began again in a low tone to mutter something about "prison," and "deserving it all," but here recollections failed Kate and she passed into a swoon.

When consciousness came again to Kate, the voice was gone, the parlor empty and the house silent. The dawn of a December morning was showing itself in the east.

Kate made an effort to collect her confused thoughts. She recollects she was at Mrs. Black-rock's. She had retired, and had been awakened from sleep. It was not a dream; and now she knew that she had overheard the confession of a somnambulist, who had imagined himself to be in a court of trial for a crime he had committed far back in years now distant and in some other country. She, Kate, had been stolen from her father, who was this same Longfellow. Wealth had been stolen, too. Was this the explanation to this fine residence and splendid farm? Was Mrs. Medford not her mother, and if not, how had she been transferred to her? What was her real name? Who was her mother?

Oh, the questioning that came to poor Kate's startled mind at the revelation that had so suddenly and strangely flashed upon her. She determined to return home at once and ask Mrs. Medford to tell her the truth, for the truth she must now have, whatever it might be. Early in the forenoon she excused herself and went home.

Mrs. Medford noticed something wrong with her and followed her to her room.

“Are you sick, Kate?” she asked kindly.

“Yes, ma, I’m sick! Sick in my heart!” said Kate, in a broken tone. Then she threw her arms about Mrs. Medford’s neck and cried:

"O ma, are you not my own mother? Am I not your own daughter? Tell me, tell me, are you my own ma?"

Mrs. Medford was completely taken by surprise. She had intended revealing all to Kate when she would come of age, but this promise made to herself was perhaps only the temporary evasion of a difficult duty. Instinctively she now saw that it was no time to delay. Explanation followed, and Kate told her everything. Then Mrs. Medford told Kate that she had, when an infant, been with the Blackrocks, but when children were born to them, she had been transferred to Mrs. Medford, who supposed she was a homeless orphan. Never till that hour had she suspected her birth.

"You say, Kate," said Mrs. Medford, "that Jerry mentioned Mr. Longfellow. Could it be—is it possible that he is my husband's brother whom we supposed dead, Dr. Henry Longfellow Clarke? He went as an army surgeon, and we supposed he had perished in the Indian Mutiny. But whether he is or not, you are my child, Katie, and I shall still be your own mother, I hope," and she kissed her tenderly. Kate was consoled by her mother's loving assurances and controlled her emotion. But she said, after a moment's reflection, "Ma, if he is my own father, I should care for him in his old age. I shall feel it my duty to do so."

In the retrospect of thought that followed, she found the interpretation of those mysterious feelings she experienced the last night of the writing class.

Longfellow had known her. She recalled his emotion as he kissed her hand. The conviction deepened that he was her father.

"Why, Kate!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Medford, "Mr. Stafford might know him. Did they ever meet?"

"They met at the writing class," answered Kate. "I shall go to him this afternoon."

That afternoon Kate and Mrs. Medford found Mr. Stafford at home in his study, and they briefly made known their quest.

"Your surmise is quite correct," said Mr. Stafford. "Longfellow is your relative, and Kate's own father. He told us his story the night before he went away. Come into the parlor and hear it," and as he spoke he led the way to the parlor.

Kate was the first to enter, and as she went in the door a white bulldog with a new brass collar trotted over to meet her, and from the farther side of the parlor a tall gray figure came forward also to greet her.

"O my father!" cried Kate, rushing into his wide open arms, that folded about her as he drew her to his heart, while he said in a broken voice, "My own child! My long lost Katie! God has given you back to me, my little one!"

II.

THE BETTER HOPE.

No one was more surprised over the new relationship discovered than Arthur. He had not a single doubt, however, that Dr. Clarke was a kinsman.

"Let me prove to you, Arthur, that I am a relative of yours, and no imposter," said Dr. Clarke, that same evening at "The Old Orchard." "Your father was not my brother, only a foster brother. He had lived at my mother's from his infancy. I had only one sister. Now for the proof: I suppose you have the mate of this," holding up a large gold button.

"Why, did you find that button that afternoon?" cried Arthur. "I never expected to see it again."

Then he produced the other.

Dr. Clarke (for we shall henceforth call him by his own professional name) now screwed off the top of the massive gold button, and disclosed a miniature ambrotype of two men, comparatively young, one of whom was Arthur's father, and the other Dr. Clarke.

"You will find the same in the other button," said Dr. Clarke. "I gave those to your father, and he gave these to me. We had the ambrotype put in both pairs." Here he produced another pair, almost the same pattern, with screw tops also.

"I could scarcely give you better proof of my identity. I have travelled several hundred miles to bring these back. Then Mr. Stafford, quite unexpectedly, appears as a living witness. If more be needed I shall have to take a trip over the ocean for them."

But further proof was unnecessary. Kate was satisfied, and now the whole wealth of her affectionate nature was poured out in response to a father's love.

Special revival services were already in progress in Mr. Stafford's church when Dr. Clarke returned. When announcing the beginning of the work, Mr. Stafford had said: "I expect to finish my active ministry among you. We have had no large ingathering since I came, but I have 'sown in hope,' and I trust the harvest is at hand."

The following evening there was a good attendance, and the spirit of prayer was in the meeting. Mr. Stafford gave an invitation to seekers to come forward and kneel with him. The first one to move out was Joker Bohn; Ben Wiley followed, and several other young people came after.

A strange feeling came to Arthur when he saw Joker stepping out so courageously, but he did not follow. The day following he spoke to his mother about the matter.

"I have been wondering, mother," he said, "if I have that true spiritual life of which Mr. Stafford speaks so frequently. His address last evening on the condition of those 'who have the form of godliness,

but denying the power,' led me to examine my own inward state. I cannot say that I am satisfied. Every word that Mr. Stafford speaks does me good. I feel like uncovering my very head in his presence, for there seems to me to be so much of God in these aged ministers. But you know he is not of our denomination, and I scarcely feel free to move forward among the people, as Dr. Sam and other young people are doing. Besides, if I were to go, would I go as a seeker or as a Christian believer?"

His mother answered: "Arthur, if you can receive any benefit from those services, or from going forward, do so. If you are not satisfied about your religious experience, go as a seeker of grace. We are told that 'If any man love God, the same is known of him'; therefore we should have assurance in so important a matter. We know when we love. Pay no attention to the matter of denomination. It is a human thing, a mere temporal distinction that relates to forms and church polity. While it may have been, in a sense, providential, it has nothing essential to personal salvation; nor is it divine in any other sense. The Master said, 'Learn of me.' He called His followers 'disciples,' those who had learned of Him. Not until a later period did anything like sects appear. Judging from Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth, he did not expect nor approve of divisions and distinctions among those who had a common faith. The earliest manifestations of the sectarian spirit evidently did not originate in a high spiritual condition of the Church, and it is significant that as

modern sects advance in spirituality they draw closer together."

"I think I would receive benefit, mother, by taking a more active and forward part in the meetings," said Arthur.

"I will accompany you, Arthur," replied his mother. Before many days Arthur had found "newness of life," and became one of the most active workers.

The revival spread, and before the week closed forty persons had professed to find peace. The meetings were of a quiet order. Mr. Stafford's appeals were simple, reasonable and scriptural. A profound work was in progress, and the moving force began to be felt in the surrounding neighborhood. The revival was talked of everywhere. The atmosphere appeared to be throbbing with spiritual pulsations. Many unwilling persons had it thrust upon them in spite of themselves, and only the most callous, or those intentionally skeptical, made a successful resistance. Indeed, with those who attended, there did not appear to be resistance.

Arthur's thoughts turned toward another individual, an enemy, as he supposed. It was Steve Fitzhugh, and he wondered if anything could be done to reclaim Steve. He had heard of his terrible experience with the dog, the after-results of which had nearly cost him his life. He spoke to his mother about going to see him, and was surprised that she encouraged him to visit Steve. Arthur had hoped that she would advise him not to do so. One morning, during the second week of the meeting, he resolved to call on Steve.

It was a hard duty. On the way his feet seemed weighted with lead, and he had some fears for the results of his visit. When he came in sight of Steve's home, he stopped, looked back, then turned again and went forward. Arthur was young, and very human, but he was making a brave struggle to do that which seemed right.

Steve's mother met him at the door, and she also surprised Arthur by saying that she was sure her son would be glad to see him.

Steve extended his left hand to Arthur cheerfully, and requested him to be seated. Then the mother left them alone. It was now Steve's turn to surprise Arthur by saying, "You are having wonderful meetings in the church, I hear."

"Who told you about the meetings?" asked Arthur, amazed to find Steve caring anything about revival services, or even willing to talk about such.

"Cynthia Daysmore, the Salvation Army girl," answered Steve. "She has called to see me several times since this happened," glancing at the bandaged shoulder. Then he continued: "I'm glad now that it did happen, for I have found something while here that I might never have known if this had not happened to me. Arthur, I know what brought you here to-day. You are a new man, and so am I. It happened in this room, and she talked with me, even after I had sent her away once. She told me of your stand in the meetings, and if you had not come to me I would have called to see you before long. Arthur, the old life is gone for ever, and Steve Fitz-

hugh is going to try what there is in religion." There was deep emotion in his voice as he spoke.

For a few moments Arthur leaned back in his chair and gazed in silence on Steve, almost wondering whether he were not in a dream and only in imagination going through those things which during his waking moments he had desired.

"Steve, I have not understood you. Forgive me," said Arthur.

"I ought to ask you to forgive me, and I do," answered Steve.

Once more their hands came together.

At the end of half an hour Arthur returned to tell his mother of the most wonderful event of the whole revival. How light his steps were now, and how short seemed the walk home! There was a song in Arthur's heart. It was like a new conversion for him, for his only enemy was reconciled.

The report of Steve's conversion through the self-denying ministrations of the "Army girl," spread far and wide wherever he was known, and gave an impetus to the revival, so that it once more leaped up into new power.

Joker had thought much of Jerry Blackrock while the meetings were in progress, and he resolved to try to get Jerry out if possible. One morning, instead of going direct to school, he went first to Jerry's home.

Mrs. Blackrock received him coldly, but when he made known his mission, she allowed him to go up to Jerry's room. Matters had reached such a stage

that Mrs. Blackrock was willing to accept anything that gave any hope of helping her husband, who was on the verge of insanity. He would remain all day in his darkened room and would neither go outside nor down stairs for his meals. At night his troubled sleep was made hideous by imaginary trials, and over and over again he raved his confessions or pleaded for mercy. Mrs. Blackrock began to fear lest someone should overhear him and the report should gain circulation.

When Joker entered the room he could see nothing, but as his eyes became adjusted to the darkness he discovered the crouching figure of Jerry in a wicker rocking-chair, and he went straight into his mission.

“Good morning, Jerry,” said he. “We are having the grandest meetings in the church ever known in these parts, and I came to ask you to come. If you will I’ll come this way from school and go with you to-night. Say you will come, Jerry.”

“I’m afraid to go,” answered Jerry, appearing to understand what Joker was speaking of. “I’m afraid to leave this room. They might get hold of me. I’ve been a bad man and I deserve it all. Yes, I deserve it all !”

He was just launching out on his former confession, but Joker interrupted him. He had now a strong suspicion that something was wrong with Jerry which bore some relation to the private affairs of Mrs. Medford.

“Jerry, don’t mind what is past. Let it go. That is what I have done, or I could not have come here.

No one at the church will do you any harm. The meetings are to do people good. They have done me good, Jerry, and so they will you, too, if you will only come. Some people have been wondering why you both here do not come. Now, Jerry, say you'll come and I will come back to-night and we'll go together."

The fact that Joker had returned to his house to invite and even plead with him to go out to the meetings, and the assurances that he gave in a tone of manly confidence, appeared to stir Jerry from his lethargy and bring some hope to his haunted soul, so that Joker finally prevailed. But he was not successful with Mrs. Blackrock.

That night of the meetings was one never to be forgotten by those who were present. It was one of those times when the invisible seemed to envelope everyone, and a deep awe, a heart-hush, rested upon the whole congregation. Dr. Sam had succeeded in persuading his mother to come out that evening. Jerry and Joker sat near them.

The meeting was opened by singing Moore's soul-touching hymn :

“ Come, ye disconsolate, where’er ye languish ;
Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel ;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your
anguish ;
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.”

Before the first stanza had been sung Jerry was weeping. The entire surroundings and the spiritual atmosphere of the meeting were so new to him, and so widely different from what he had been living in,

shut up at home ; and he was already so deeply penitent for his crime that he was completely broken down. The wave of emotion passed to others, and soon many, and among them Dr. Sam's mother, were weeping. After Mr. Stafford had preached a short time from the words, "I will arise and go to my father," he deemed it better to change the meeting to one of prayer and testimony. When the opportunity for testimony was given Jerry struggled to his feet and asked if he might be permitted to make a public confession of a wrong he had done.

" If it will give you any relief, or be a help to you, my brother, do so," said Mr. Stafford, " and may the Spirit help you to speak all that is in your heart."

The effort Jerry had made appeared to strengthen him, and he briefly told the congregation of how he had been living a double life ; that he had wronged a man not present in the service, and that he would make the earliest possible effort to see him and make the matter right, as far as it lay in his power. He sat down without disclosing the names of the parties concerned. But Mrs. Medford and her family made no effort at concealment. Kate, especially, desired that the truth should be known.

Two days afterwards Jerry sought out and obtained an interview with Dr. Clarke. He told Dr. Clarke that Mrs. Blackrock held the property in her name, and refused to surrender it. Dr. Clarke disdained to take any legal proceedings to recover it, but he extended to Jerry in full the forgiveness which he sought.

Somewhere in a Book it will be found written that "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." When the good people of Bellheath found Steve Fitzhugh and Jerry Blackrock joining in devotional services, and along with them partaking of the most sacred Feast, they saw what "the better hope" may accomplish in the characters of the worst men.

III.

DR. SAMS MOTHER.

THE revival had entered the third week, and the Christmas vacation was at hand. One morning after Dr. Sam had left for the school, his mother found that he had forgotten to take to the little store a list of certain household supplies which she had prepared for him, as was her custom, and as she required the things that day in preparation for the Christmas season, a journey to the store was necessary.

At the store she met Mrs. Stenson, and the two women went out of the store together. Mrs. Stenson asked Mrs. Martin to go into the tavern with her for a few minutes; but Mrs. Martin declined at first, for she remembered her weakness.

“I would like to talk with you about several things,” pressed Mrs. Stenson. “Come in a few minutes.”

“Well, it must be only a few minutes,” said Mrs. Martin, at length yielding.

Mrs. Stenson was not laying a snare for a victim. She intended speaking with Mrs. Martin about the meetings, and also about their relations with Dr. Sam. But through the bar-room window Dave Stenson saw Mrs. Martin and his wife coming

toward the tavern. His eyes began to gleam with a malicious light, and he smiled as he formed his fiendish purpose. Scarcely was Mrs. Martin seated in the front room when he stepped in with a tray in his hand, upon which was a glass of hot brandy.

"A beautiful morning, Mrs. Martin," he said cheerily; "but cold, very cold. Have this!" and he placed the steaming beverage close under her face. Upward rose the fumes of the brandy and mingled with her breath, reviving the old appetite in a moment. She could not resist. She took the glass. Mrs. Stenson made no attempt to interfere, and Dave remained until he saw her drain the glass, which was a large one.

Half an hour afterwards she started for home and her steps were unsteady. Dave went out with her and slipped a small flask into her pocket. Then he stood watching her unsteady gait as she went down the road, smiling the while. The smile passed into a loud, hearty laugh when he came back to the bar-room and, addressing his son, said: "Egad, Heddie! Our innings this time!"

When Dr. Sam reached home that evening some parcels of groceries lay upon the table, the fires were all out, the house cold, and his mother lay upon the sofa intoxicated. In the little cabinet stood an empty flask. All was plain to Dr. Sam. He did not go to the meeting that night, not because he was ashamed, but his heart was heavy and he desired to be alone. Long after the hour for closing the meeting came he remained upon his knees, and the burden of his

prayer may be easily surmised. Dave Stenson had dealt him one blow in a tender part.

This was only one case of the many in which these fiends of the liquor traffic lie in wait for the unwary and the weak. The same work, in various ways, is going on in more than two thousand places in Ontario. Yet there are those who advocate a theory of moral development, in which such places as the open bar may find room. These moral philosophers assure us that persons grow in morality by confronting temptation. Doors that lead thousands to death are a necessity to the highest development of moral manhood.

Apart from all the objections which may be brought against such a theory, even as applied to the cases of the strong and self-reliant, it is unmerciful and un-Christian still. What shall be said of those whose vitiated appetite has so far enslaved them that the power of resistance is gone, or so weakened as to be almost helpless in the presence of the temptation? A theory that might fit a perfect humanity will never do for a very imperfect humanity; and there is no perfect humanity on which to try it. From the facts of social life we frame a simple theory of legal prohibition, because those facts make it plain that if the temptations of strong drink be not removed the weak ones must perish.

Friday night came, bringing Christmas Eve, and Dr. Sam decided to go to the meeting. He and his mother had talked over her fall into drink again, and he was satisfied that she had not deliberately gone

to "The Briton's Lodge" for liquor, which in a large measure restored his confidence. Nor had he any doubt that she had obtained divine forgiveness.

The Christmas Eve meeting was a large one. Mr. Stafford preached with unusual power on, "No room for Jesus." The associations of the evening made deeper the impressions of his theme, and the meeting was continued till a late hour.

It was after ten o'clock, and Mr. Stafford was about to close the service, when a cry rang in from the outside, "Fire! fire! fire!" A thrill of terror passed through the meeting, and almost everyone started to their feet. Who had raised the cry no one could ever tell. As the people poured out of the church they saw the gleam of a flaming building, about a mile away.

"It is Mrs. Martin's house or barn," shouted someone on the outside of the crowd.

Arthur and Dr. Sam heard this report, and breaking through the crowd they were both over the fence in a moment and running in the direction of Dr. Sam's home. Arthur, though he ran with all his speed, was left behind by Dr. Sam; but soon the vehicles were flying past both of them, and reached Mrs. Martin's burning house before those on foot. In some way the impression prevailed that Mrs. Martin was with Dr. Sam in the church, and no effort was made at once to reach the inside of the house, a thing which might have been impossible, for when the teams arrived the house was a roaring furnace.

"Where is my mother?" cried Dr. Sam, rushing

up wildly. No one had seen her. Was she not in the church?

“Mother! mother!” shouted the frantic son, rushing around the house. But there was no reply; and the awful conviction flashed upon him that his mother was within that mass of burning timbers.

Dr. Sam made a rush for the front door, but it was firmly locked, and the terrible heat drove him back, his clothes burning in several places. He ran around again to the back of the house, but there was even less chance of gaining an entrance there, in the heat and blinding smoke which was driven back by the wind. Those present now saw that he was in imminent danger, for it was evident that the building might collapse at any moment. They pleaded with him not to throw away his life, but he rushed away again to the window of his mother’s bedroom, on the first floor. The men followed him, and as they approached the glass came crashing out, as pieces of timber from above fell against it. A fierce current of red flame curling around and upward compelled them to fall backward. But in through the opening of the window they caught occasional glimpses of a blazing bundle upon the bed. Dr. Sam also saw it, and as he looked a blackened arm was thrown upward from the bundle!

“There, see! Oh, mother!” he cried, and sprang toward the window, which he reached, defying the fury of the flame, and even climbed partly to the window-sill, holding his breath amid the destroying element. Then a wild cry came from him that sent

a shiver through the stout men who stood around. Through that awful medium he had taken a last look on his mother's face on earth. Backward he fell, out of the fire, his clothes now burning in every part. Two strong men rushed forward and dragged him out, while others brought water or threw snow on him to quench his burning clothing. Some remained looking in through the window at the burning bed with its human sacrifice. As they gazed intently they saw a red jet of blood spurt upward against the burning wall of the room, and then they knew that Dr. Sam's mother was dead.

Suddenly Hedley Stenson appeared among the crowd. He was evidently somewhat intoxicated. He had not been at the meeting. No one knew where he came from. The presence of the crowd who were looking in at the window drew Hedley's attention ; and as he went over the two men were dragging Dr. Sam out.

“Heavens !” cried Hedley, “ is his mother in the house ? I thought she was at the church with him. We must get her out ;” and throwing aside his overcoat he advanced toward the window, covering his face with his hands.

“Keep back ! The roof is going to fall in !” cried two or three voices to him. But Hedley was now on the window-sill, where a roaring flame still poured out its torrent of consuming heat. He had leaned half way over into the room, when the roof gave way, carrying down the upper floor and sweeping the whole downward with an awful crash. A cloud of

deep black smoke flecked with sparks arose for a moment. Then the flames gained the mastery again, and by their light the men near the window saw Hedley pinned in the burning, broken timbers, his feet and legs projecting from the window. They now made every possible effort to fight back the flames from this particular part of the house, splashing in water and throwing in snow in such limited supplies as they could obtain. At the end of half an hour Hedley's blackened, dead body was dragged back from the ruin, and his overcoat was thrown over it.

Arthur had Dr. Sam removed to his own home, and Dr. Clarke began a vigil over his young friend which lasted for several days, during which Dr. Sam went through the delirium of brain fever, and suffered untold tortures from the burning he had received.

But who may describe the scenes in "The Briton's Lodge" that followed the awful events of this awful night? Or who may enter into the feelings of the parents of the young man who was dead?

"Hedley dead! My son dead! Dead, dead, do you say?" cried Dave, wildly, when he was told.

Yes, dead! Hedley dead!

Dr. Sam had indeed been smitten in a vital part, and the wound could never be healed. But at what a price had the revenge been accomplished!

IV.

HAPPY NEW YEAR.

THE revival meetings closed after having continued through five weeks. More than one hundred persons were received into membership in the churches in Bellheath and vicinity.

Mr. Stafford was far spent when the work closed. It had been a great drain upon his declining strength. But it gave him a joy deeper than he could express to witness such a large ingathering in the closing months of his ministry, and his expressions of gratitude were deep and constant. He was nearing the gates of the "Crowning City" with the warrior's harness on. Very soon they would open to receive this hero of more than "a hundred fights."

One day Joker had returned from his music lesson very much excited. Miss Trillman had said a mysterious thing to him, and as was his custom whenever he had any trouble or any difficulty to solve, he told it to Mrs. Medford.

"She told me not to come again for a lesson till about the middle of January, for she is going away on vacation," said Joker. "But the thing I can't understand is that she said when she returned home she was going to bring my father back with her."

"Did you ask her whether she knew your father or not?" asked Mrs. Medford.

"I did," replied Joker, "and she said, 'Wait, and you shall see.'"

"Well, Joker, I suppose that is all you can do," replied Mrs. Medford.

"But if Miss Trillman should bring back my father—if she should find him out—shall I have to leave you, Auntie?" asked the boy.

"Not unless you wish to leave me, Joker," replied Mrs. Medford. "You understand I have a legal claim upon you, and no one can take you from me, not even your father. Of course, if your father should come to you, and you desire to go with him, I would not care to prevent you from doing so; but he cannot take you from me."

Good! Hurrah!" shouted the boy. "I'll stay here."

That same day Mrs. Medford received a call from Mrs. Daysmore. She was in deep trouble. Old Mervin Robbs, her uncle, had again threatened to take his own life. In arranging his room one morning she had found a phial of carbolic acid hidden under his pillow, or she supposed it to be hidden. He had expressed a strong desire to visit friends in Detroit a few days before, and when they had declared themselves opposed to the journey on the ground that "something might happen to him," he had replied that if he could not go something worse might happen to him at home. Mrs. Daysmore interpreted this as a declaration in favor of suicide, and

the finding of the phial confirmed her belief. Finally, to pacify him, she had prepared him for the journey. "He is very melancholy," went on Mrs. Daysmore, "ever since his manuscript was destroyed in the burning of Dr. Sam's home. He has taken up the last dollar from the undertaker's, and I really do not know what we are going to do with him now, or how to keep him employed when he returns. I put all his linen in his trunk, clean and newly laundried, as he requested, so I suppose he intends remaining away for some time."

Many people in trouble came to Mrs. Medford for counsel and sympathy, and whatever counsel she might give she always gave sympathy. So she endeavored to comfort Mrs. Daysmore with the hope that Mr. Robbs might be improved by his journey, and that some means of amusing or employing him might be found when he would return. She succeeded so far that her friend returned home feeling that a burden had been lifted from her spirit.

It came to Joker's ears that Mr. Robbs had again threatened to commit suicide, and he decided to complete his old friend's obituary and hold it in readiness should anything of so serious a nature occur. The subject of the obituary had requested him not to make it too long, for fear of the editor dissecting it in such a manner as to spoil it altogether. There were items which an editor might not think of any importance, but which Mr. Robbs deemed essential to any correct obituary. Generally speaking, editors had not much sentiment. They would garble any-

thing for the sake of saving a little space. So Joker, having made it as brief as possible, decided to send it to Ben Wiley for review. Ben had lately become a printer's devil in the office of the *City Journal*. He received the copy and turned it over to the local editor, who supplied the necessary dates, in brackets.

Three days afterwards the *City Journal* had the following startling item, under "Marriages":

"In Detroit, on New Year's Day, at the M. E. Parsonage, Vermont Street, by the Rev. Dr. Enoch Moore, Mr. Mervin Robbs, to Miss Eleanor Trillman, B.M., all of Middlesex, Ont."

In the same issue, on the page devoted to "Local News," among "Bellheath Beams," there was one beginning with "Memorial," which ran as follows:

"Mervin Robbs, an old and much beloved resident, passed away in great peace (on New Year's Day) at the residence of his niece, Mrs. Daysmore, with whom he had resided for a great many years.

"For a long period before his departure he had desired to die. He suffered much from a deep melancholy which effected his liver, and his brain also, and at times his reason was in danger. Not wishing to die by his own hand, he always gave his friends notice when the fits were coming on, so that they could watch him. He was thus saved from an untimely end, and from much unnecessary and cruel suffering.

"Mr. Robbs was at one time a noted musician. He had filled the position of organist and leader in three important charges in London, England, but he

found it necessary to leave all these important positions in succession because of disagreements in the choir.

“Our departed friend wrote one great work which would have brought him much distinction had it only been printed and a large number of copies sold. The title of it was to have been ‘The Key to all the Temptations of the Devil;’ but when in the hands of the reviewer, the M.S. was lost in a destructive fire, and thus it failed to come to fruition.

“Mr. Robbs was never married, although a remarkable handsome man, but he preferred to live and die free from those cares incident to family life, which increase with years.

“In order that his memory should be perpetuated to his bereaved and sorrowing relatives, at his own request, this memorial has been written by Joker Bohn, who had known him for about six months, and had learned to love him. He will be much missed by all and by the one who writes this, and who hopes that he may continue to rest where he has been laid, in the same peace in which he passed away.”

“P.S.—Dear Ben, please do not cut any parts out of this that I send you. Mr. Robbs won’t like it if you do. Try to get it printed as it is.—J. B.”

It is needless to say that when the issue containing these items reached “The Old Orchard,” the news caused much surprise, and also as much amusement as the family had found for many days. Even Dr. Sam forgot his sorrow for a few moments when the obituary was read to him. Joker took it all in good

part, and joined in the laugh with the others. "Hold on, Auntie," he said, when he had read it, "that's Ben's work. I'll get even with him yet for that. He told me he was going away to be a printer's devil, and I think he is going to make a success of it."

Mrs. Daysmore called at "The Old Orchard" a few days afterward and expressed the greatest satisfaction at the turn of events.

"O Mrs. Medford, you don't know how glad I am to get rid of Uncle Mervin! That is, you know, not that I am tired of him, for he was a dear old man, and we shall all be very lonely without him, you know. But oh, I am so glad he will leave us now, you know, and will have someone of his own to look after him who can do it. And that piece in the paper! Well, if that was not the best! Dear, oh! we all laughed till we didn't know whether we were crying or laughing. Minerva thought that it was the cutest thing she ever saw, so she said. Tell Joker, will you, what we all thought of it. Tell him to come over again soon. Pa would like to have a chat with him, you know."

Then Mrs. Daysmore told Mrs. Medford another thing. It was a secret. She had promised not to tell it to anyone, but she did not think she was breaking her promise in telling it to Mrs. Medford, her dearest friend; but Mrs. Medford must be sure not to tell it to anyone except her own family. It was this: Her daughter, Cynthia, and Mr. Steve Fitzhugh were going to be married, sometime before

spring. "Cynthia will go on the lakes with Steve all through the summer, you know," continued Mrs. Daysmore. "She and Mr. Fitzhugh will be able to do so much good among the sailors. Oh, he just thinks there is no one like Cynthia."

When a convenient day came, Mrs. Medford and Kate called at Barberry Cottage to offer congratulations to the happy couple who now resided there, for beyond all doubt Miss Trillman had become Mrs. Robbs.

"I wish you both a 'Happy New Year,' Mr. and Mrs. Robbs," was Mrs. Medford's greeting.

"Thank you! Oh, thank you! We are indeed happy," said Mrs. Robbs, as she warmly embraced both Mrs. Medford and Kate. "Why, dear heart, Mervin, my husband, you know, is not like the same man. See how cheerful and bright he looks," and she turned her own beaming countenance toward her husband.

"I think you are both looking very much brighter," said Mrs. Medford. "That's as it should be."

"But you do not know all the romance in our affairs," said Mrs. Robbs. "Why, if you could only compose, you could make as good a story out of it as some of those in Dickens."

"Never mind Dickens, Nellie," said Mr. Robbs. "Indeed, I will mind him," said Mrs. Robbs, with something of her old-time energetic tone of voice. Then, more mildly, she went one, "Next to you, I think more of him than any man living or dead. It was Dickens who kept my heart warm and my affections pure all these years."

"But you will not need him for such a purpose now," said Mr. Robbs, with a lover-like smile, and Mrs. Robbs could not help smiling back at him.

During these exchanges of conjugal affection and familiarity, Kate had turned her face away to examine a new specimen of chrysanthemum which Mrs. Robbs had brought home. After a time Mr. Robbs left the room, and then Mrs. Robbs told Mrs. Medford and Kate a romantic story.

This was her second marriage to Mr. Robbs. She had married him years before, when he held a lucrative position in London, but he had not been true. When a young woman, a Miss Bohn, one of a class of pupils, preferred charges against him and he made a confession, Mrs. Robbs had banished him. When the child was born, Mrs. Robbs cared for the mother and her infant boy until circumstances made it necessary to give the child into the care of a Barnardo Home. When he was sent to this country, she followed, and kept the child under her notice, but she resumed her maiden name of Trillman. Mr. Robbs had followed them both, and at intervals had pleaded for a reunion and forgiveness.

"At last I have forgiven him all, Mrs. Medford," said Mrs. Robbs, now weeping. "I am sure he has repented, and with all his faults he is my husband. I love him still—yes, better than life—and I shall always love him. Do you think I was wrong in the course I have pursued? I thought we ought, under the circumstances, to have the marriage performed again. Was I wrong, Mrs. Medford?"

"I could not for a moment condemn you for following the affectionate promptings of your heart," replied her friend. We are to understand this as the explanation of what you promised Joker before leaving."

"Joker is the child," said Mr. Robbs. "One of us will have to tell him of his parentage."

"I think I shall ask you to leave that to me," said Mrs. Medford. "He told me of your promise."

Mr. Robbs soon returned to the room and he was the first to speak of the obituary, which he had seen. Both Mrs. Robbs and he laughed heartily over it, while Mrs. Robbs declared that she could not recall anything more humorous in any of the boys in Dickens. Soon afterwards Mrs. Medford and Kate returned home, leaving the inmates of Barberry Cottage to enjoy a happy New Year.

Nor was the New Year any less happy at "The Old Orchard," save for the sorrow that had fallen upon Dr. Sam.

The year had not moved on its way many days, when Arthur, after a mental and spiritual struggle, the intensity of which was known only to himself, told his mother that he had decided to devote his life to the ministry of the gospel. With a bright smile that to some extent hid her deep emotion, his mother replied :

"Arthur, I have waited a long time to hear this from you. I expected it. It has been the dearest hope of my life that you might give yourself to the ministry of the gospel. When I have heard you

preach once I think I shall then be able to say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy handmaid depart in peace, according to thy word.' "

He stooped down and, kissing his mother tenderly, said, " Mother, I shall always bless you for being wise and good. Whatever I am I owe it to you; and if I ever do anything in life, it will all be due to my mother."

V.

THE PARTING OF WAYS.

DR. SAM'S recovery was more rapid than anyone expected, but he came forth from the awful experience as one who had passed close to the borderland of life where shadows gather, and a sombre shade had settled upon the spirit that had always been optimistic. Dr. Clarke observed Kate's deep solicitude for his patient and interpreted it correctly. It revealed something of the relation of these two young lives that caused him a little regret. When Dr. Sam was far enough recovered to enter upon any business transaction, he sold everything in his possession, resigned his position in the school, and with about three thousand dollars to invest in an education, he began to lay plans for his medical course.

Affairs at "The Briton's Lodge" became ominous. A deep suspicion lurked against Dave Stenson for being the instigator of Mrs. Martin's death. Many former associates now avoided him, without even offering the hypocrisy of an excuse for so doing. His business fell off, and he became reduced to the patronage and companionship of a few wretched victims of his trade and the occasional traveller who might call at the tavern. It also became more and more evident

that there were now only two people in their family, and those two lived much apart. A day came when they quarrelled over a small matter and Dave swore madly at his wife. Another day came when, impatient at his continued drunkenness, she boldly took a bottle out of his hand and dashed it on the floor. She was blue with cold, for he neglected to provide her with fuel. In his anger, he retaliated by throwing in her face the poisonous liquid he had poured out.

"I wanted to sell, and you would not let me; so you have it all," he shouted hoarsely at her. There came another day when he struck her cheek with his open palm, because she refused to prepare dinner for a traveller at three o'clock in the afternoon.

"That is the first blow," she said to him; "and that will be the last you will ever give me. You are no better than a murderer! It is you that is responsible for Hedley's death. Your plan killed him, you villain! Say a word more, and I will send you over the road."

That evening the returning stage carried away her trunk and she was a passenger inside. The driver had asked:

"Shall I take this trunk, Dave? I'll not take it if you object. What do you say?"

"I don't object," was his reply.

She only said, "Good-bye," and they parted for ever.

One evening at "The Old Orchard," Kate, Dr. Clarke, and Mrs. Medford were left alone. Dr. Sam was absent on business. Arthur had gone away to school. Joker was at the home of Minerva Daysmore.

Dr. Clarke took the opportunity thus afforded of telling Mrs. Medford and Kate the story of his life.

In his medical course he had made a specialty of surgery, which he further pursued in a post-graduate course on the Continent. Kate's mother had passed away when Kate was born, and then Dr. Clarke had decided to give his services to the army, for a time at least. The Crimean War began, and he was ordered, on short notice, to join a regiment. His infant daughter was left in charge of his steward, Mr. Blackrock, to await the coming of her grandmother, who was to take charge of her. Blackrock, with his wife and the child, disappeared, together with money and jewels, leaving no trace of their movements.

When Dr. Clarke returned he succeeded in following their movements to Montreal, and there he also obtained some trace of the stolen jewels. But he could not trace them further. The Sepoy mutiny broke out, and he was called to India. The search for his child, whom he believed to be somewhere in Ontario, had to be relinquished. Before returning from the Orient he spent some time in South Africa, where he met with large financial success. The search was resumed when he finally returned, but without success, and he went back to Ireland. As old age began to creep on him he felt a restless desire to make one more effort to find his child. He obtained his first clue from an old book-peddler who called at Mrs. Medford's once or twice a year, and who had also been in the home of a man named Blackrock. From the information thus received he was led to believe in

the identity of the family with that of the foster-brother who had come to Canada, but with whom he had not corresponded for many years. It was only a very slender clue, but he followed it up, in the hope that through them he might also identify Blackrock. In order to have the opportunity of entering any home he might desire, he had adopted the vocation of bookselling also. In this capacity he had arrived at "The Briton's Lodge" on the day when Arthur and Kate appeared.

"Pa, you intimated to Arthur that you had one sister," said Kate. "Is she living yet?"

Dr. Clarke's eyes fell, as he replied, "Katie, she is dead; my sister was Mrs. Martin."

Kate became very pale, and Mrs. Medford could not, for a moment, express her surprise. Then she asked, "Are you quite sure, Doctor? We never knew it. If my husband did, he never told me."

"I am sure," answered Dr. Clarke. "She knew who I was before she had seen me, from Dr. Sam's description of me; but she wished it kept secret."

He did not say whether Arthur's father had known it or not. Conscious of her fallen condition, she had succeeded in hiding herself.

Dr. Clarke knew how this revelation would affect Kate. It was the second time within a short period that the iron had entered deep into her soul. Her determination was fixed. She and Dr. Sam must part. When she spoke, it was quietly.

"Pa, your story reminds me of something one might read of. How I would delight in visiting

those old places where you and Arthur's father spent your boyhood!"

"Then, Katie, you shall see them all," replied Dr. Clarke, "for we shall go there this spring." He understood Kate's desire.

A few days afterward Kate found a convenient opportunity of speaking with Dr. Sam privately. He also had learned of the relationship that existed, now beyond all doubt **correct**.

"We must soon part, Sam," said Kate.

"I understand you are soon going away," he replied; "but must we separate entirely? Can we not even correspond?"

"I think not," said Kate. "You will hear of us from mother. We will also hear of you, and we shall expect to hear great things of your success."

What Dr. Sam's feelings toward Kate had been was something known only to himself. He had never declared his love; but as he saw the beautiful object moving away from him, a strong impetus prompted him to make an effort to seize it. An ocean rolling between him and Kate, and no word from her from the further shore!

"Kate! Kate!" he cried, "you will not go away from me in this way. For years I have loved you; you know why I have remained silent."

"It is too late now, Sam," said Kate. "You remember the advice you once gave me, 'Always be true.' I mean to be true. It was better that you remained silent, for it would have come to this just the same; and it would have been only that much

harder for us both. I am trying to be true, and I believe my course is right. If my cousin will not be angry with me, I would like to tell him something."

"Speak out whatever you may have to say, Kate," said Dr. Sam.

"I know of a beautiful young woman who loves you. She is worthy of your love, and she is in every way a suitable companion for a man of ambition and intelligence. Marion loves you, Sam."

She gave him no time to make a reply, but putting up both her arms she clasped him to her heart, saying as she kissed him, "Good-bye, dear Sam. I will always be true."

Within a month of this evening Dr. Clarke and Kate had taken passage for the scenes of his youth.

VI.

“LIKE A GREEN BAY TREE.”

A LAST look into the bar-room of “The Briton’s Lodge.” To-night will be our last opportunity. Let us stand at the front window and look inside. The room is lighted by two lamps on brackets, over the bar, where it comes close up to the wall. The large fireplace keeps the room well ventilated, so that the atmosphere is clear, notwithstanding the smoke of cigars and pipes.

It has gone badly with Dave since Mrs. Stenson went away. He now knows that there is no hope of a renewal of license, and for weeks he has not been sober. He has tried to shut out that other sorrow, Hedley’s death, by drinking deeply. Several times of late the awful delirium tremens seized upon his maddened brain, when his imagination called up hideous creatures and hellish portraiture that tantalized his disordered mind long after the delirium passed, or even induced its return. Dave Stenson is entering those dread shades that border on eternal night, while horrors worse than death come forth to meet him and escort him within the gloom! To-night he is behind the bar, and he is stupid with drink.

What! Is this the trim, sleek, well-kept landlord of twelve months ago?—Dave Stenson, of the bright smile playing upon cherry lips when he put forth his plump, fat hand to give a friend greeting? Ah, you looked then only upon a well-kept exterior; but beneath that, the strata of manhood, physical and moral, had been saturated and befouled with alcohol. The very fires of hell smouldered beneath, gradually reducing the elements of manhood to cinders. A small egress was all that was wanting in order that the burning passions within become a consuming flame.

A motley crowd has gathered in the bar-room. When they ask for drinks they must point out which bottle they prefer. They pay, or do not, as they please. If they defraud him, he does not observe the omission. Here we see the liquor traffic stripped of its paraphernalia. We see it as *it is*.

That red-faced, blear-eyed man of fifty, with shabby clothing which hangs loosely upon him—he has lost his farm at this bar. That old man beside him, with the heavy shock of white hair, which should have been the glory of his old age—he will leave his farm in the spring, because his earnings were passed over this bar for drink instead of going to pay the mortgage. Dozing in an arm-chair near the fire is another, with low forehead, long, large nose, heavy jaws, short neck, and thick, heavy body. He has spent his life as an hostler, and has scarcely kept himself clothed. He has been filling Jimmie's place at "The Briton's Lodge," for bread and liquor. Opposite him sits a

thin, sallow, villainous-looking rake. In a mining camp he lost an eye; the one that remains roams incessantly as if in search of victims. It appears to have found one in that young man who now staggers to the bar and calls, in a loud voice, "All hands for another! Come, fellows, every man! I've two dollars left. Come! Come, Dave, old man, wake up!" and his deep voice became a bellow, as he cried again, "Come, Dave, d'ye hear!" He is a young farmer who came to the tavern three days ago, with the price of a load of wheat in his pocket. He is the son of a widow, the youngest of three children. She is waiting at home for him now. God pity her twice-widowed heart!

They all move to the bar, and each points out to Dave the bottle of liquor he desires. Then Dave proceeds heavily to hand over the bottles without speaking, while they wink, jibe and make fiendish grimaces behind his back.

Suddenly all is changed. Look! He has thrown up his left arm with a cry of fear, and his eyes start from their sockets!

"There it comes! See!" he cries; and the bottle he was about to set down on the bar is hurled with all the force of his right arm against the wall, just beneath the lamps, at some imaginary monster coming at him. The bottle smashes with a fearful crash. Dave continues to strike heavy blows at the phantom, and the frightened creatures before the bar fall back, leaving their glasses untouched. These Dave catches up and hurls them and the bottles in succes-

sion at the head of the dragon coming through the wall. Then, catching up the large brown water-pitcher, he rushes out before the bar and hurls it back among the bottles. It goes crashing through the large oblong mirror behind the row.

“ My pistol ! ” he cries, and darts out the side door, up the stairway and into his bedroom. Having secured it, he steals back, and passing around to the room behind the bar-room, he comes in again stealthily by the back door. The bar-room is empty. At the mention of the pistol all have gone out. Then three shots are fired, and more glasses are heard crashing against the wall, as the madman wages battle with the dragon.

Some occult influence now swept his mind and changed the phantom of horror. Next, those outside hear the tossing of chairs across the bar-room, and the sound of heavy steps on the floor. He begins to cry, “ Fire ! fire ! fire ! ” and, rushing out, he seizes an empty bucket and runs across the road to an old building opposite, upon which he throws the imaginary contents of the bucket. Then he rushes back, crying, “ Save Hedley ! O God ! Men, save my boy ! ”

They pump water for him, and some of the men go over and walk about the building while he throws many bucketfuls upon it.

“ The fire’s out,” cries the man at the pump, as Dave returns to fill the bucket.

“ Is Hedley safe ? ” he asks, coming over.

“ He’s all right,” cried the man at the pump.

The violent exercise appeared to cool Dave's burning brain, and in a moment he began to complain of the cold. He darted within and locked the door. No one dared to follow. Once within, the delirium returned, and the men outside, as they walked about in the cold, heard those horrible noises, intermingled with shrieks and yells, as he fled about the room pursued by the terrible phantom of his delirium. Then there came an awful stillness.

It was perhaps ten minutes later, when flames were seen bursting through the hall and curling about the door into the bar-room. The men ran around to the back of the house to look for Dave. He was not to be seen. Thick, black smoke was rolling from the windows. Soon the flames crept up the stairway, and spread to every room, leaping out through the windows above. In a few minutes the tavern and hall were enrobed in a red mantle of devouring flame.

The morning sun looked upon a blackened, smoking patch of ground, strewn with the burnt remains of "The Briton's Lodge," and amid the ruins lay a charred human body.

VII.

“MARK THE PERFECT MAN.”

THE Saturday previous to the events recorded in the last chapter, Rev. Hiram Stafford had not risen for breakfast with his daughters. Marion carried it to his room. For some weeks he had been in failing health, and had taken only one service each Sunday. The daughters had scarcely dared to open their minds to each other. Both feared that they must soon part with their father.

While Marion sat talking with her father, Lucinda came into the room weeping.

“What is the matter, Lucinda?” asked Marion.

“Oh, Marion, Roan is dead in the stall,” replied Lucinda, coming forward. Then she sat down by the bed, and putting down her head on the coverlid, gave way to her grief. Roan had been their family driver for nearly twenty years.

“Do not weep, my child,” said Mr. Stafford, laying his thin, pale hand on her head. “Roan’s work is done, and she has served us very faithfully. I have sometimes wondered if there will be horses in the great hereafter. In the Book we read of them as being there. ‘The whole creation groaneth.’ Why,

then, may they not participate in the ‘redemption’? Why should so much noble life perish? Roan was always willing and kind, and many a rough, stormy drive we have had together. But I may not need a driver again,” he said, directing his glance now at Lucinda, who had raised her head again. “My work, too, may be done. It must be nearly over. I think, daughters, that I am drawing near the end, and I shall be glad if I am permitted to pass away in the active work. That is one thing I have always desired.”

A little shadow of self-depreciation stole into his face as he continued :

“Very, very imperfect has been my work. I have lost opportunities of doing good. Oh, what would I not give to have them once more! And I have not always employed to the best advantage those opportunities which I did use to some extent.”

“Pa, do not reproach yourself,” said Lucinda. “You have always been good to us, and I am sure you have never failed to be true to the truth. Do not charge hard things against yourself. ‘Who is he that condemneth?’ If He does not, then why should you?”

“That is true, Lucinda,” he replied. “I shall not. But, how I thank the good Lord that it is ‘not of works, lest any man should boast.’ No; but ‘through faith’—

“‘Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.’”

"Pa, I fear you may weary yourself talking, perhaps," said Marion. It had come to her in the last few moments that the end was not many days hence, and she calmly accepted the inevitable.

"It does not weary me, dear," he replied. "I delight to talk of these matters."

"And we delight in hearing you, pa, as we always did; but you are weak to-day and we want you to rest if you have any thought of preaching to-morrow," said Marion.

Then she smoothed back his long gray hair and tenderly kissed the high forehead. After this they had worship in Mr. Stafford's room, Marion reading Phil. iv. Something in the lesson moved him to speak again:

"God will take care of you, my daughters, when I am taken from you. 'Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken.'

The sisters went out of the room together, both with full hearts. Their father remained in bed until the afternoon, when he sat up for a short time, but was fain to return when the room was made ready. On Sunday he did not rise. How it delighted him as Marion, in the morning, and Lucinda, in the evening, conducted the worship, even though it was with deep emotion. How precious the moments were to them all!

On Sunday evening Marion sat by his bedside reading to him.

"Have you Havergal's poems there?" he asked. "I will bring them," she replied, and went to the

study for the volume. When she returned she asked :

"Is it the poem I so often read to you on Sunday evenings after you returned from service, and had Roan put away?"

"That's it, Marion," he said. "Read it to me again. You know it always soothed my mind, and I could sleep better after you had read it to me."

Then Marion read in a clear, full voice, "The Minister's Sabbath Night" :

" 'Rest him, O Father ! Thou didst send him forth
With great and glorious messages of love ;
But Thy ambassador is weary now,
Worn with the weight of his high embassy.
Now care for him as Thou hast cared for us
In sending him ; and cause him to lie down
In Thy fresh pastures, by Thy streams of peace.
Let Thy left hand be now beneath his head,
And Thine upholding right encircle him,
And, underneath, the Everlasting arms
Be felt in full support. So let him rest,
Hushed like a little child, without one care,
And so give Thy beloved sleep to-night.'

" 'Rest him, dear Master ! He hath poured for us
The wine of joy, and we have been refreshed.
Now fill his chalice, give him sweet new draughts
Of life and love, with Thine own hand ; be Thou
His ministrant to-night ; draw very near
In all thy tenderness and all Thy power.
Oh, speak to him ! Thou knowest how to speak
A word in season to Thy weary ones,
And he is weary now. Thou lovest him—
Let Thy disciple lean upon Thy breast,
And, leaning, gain new strength to 'rise and shine.'

“ ‘ Rest him, O loving Spirit ! Let Thy calm
Fall on his soul to-night, O holy Dove,
Spread Thy bright wing above him, let him rest
Beneath its shadows ; let him know afresh
The infinite truth and might of Thy dear name—
“ Our Comforter ! ” As gentlest touch will stay
The strong vibrations of a jarring chord,
So lay Thy hand upon his heart, and still
Each overstraining throb, each pulsing pain.
Then, in the stillness, breathe upon the strings,
And let Thy holy music overflow
With soothing power his listening, resting soul.’ ”

When Marion ceased, he murmured, “ Read it to me once more, Marion.”

She read the poem through the second time. When she looked at him again he was sleeping. They all slept that night.

On Monday many kind people came to inquire for their aged pastor. In many ways the burden was lightened for Lucinda and Marion in little ministrations of love by the members of the congregation.

On Monday night the daughters kept watch, each two hours at a time, while the other rested.

“ Pa, have you any pain ? ” asked Marion as she kissed him good-night.

“ No pain, dear,” he replied ; “ only I feel weaker. I am at rest, perfect rest. So do not be alarmed. If I need you, I will call.” Marion saw that he was quite clear in his mind. So the night passed as usual.

On Tuesday he was much weaker. The physician admonished them to keep close watch over him. He left a medicine to stimulate heart action.

During the first half of the night Lucinda sat in his room, keeping close watch, while Marion lay down. On toward midnight he awoke and spoke to Lucinda. Noticing a peculiar intermittent light shining through the window curtain, he asked Lucinda what it was. Looking out at the window, she saw the sky not far away aglare with the light from a burning building.

“It must be the hotel on fire, or some building near it, pa,” answered Lucinda, as she came back to his bedside. Soon he dropped into a quiet sleep for a few minutes. Then Lucinda noticed his lips moving, and bending down she caught the words, “Grace, grace; saved by grace,” and she knew that the chief message of his ministry was now his own refuge. Again his lips moved, and bending over him again she caught portions of the verse:

“Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.”

It was whispered faintly and somewhat disconnectedly, as the failing memory recalled it; but the outline of the verses was complete. After a short pause, the latter half of the stanza came also to his memory in much the same manner:

“Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O—receive—my soul—at last!”

A few minutes after the stanza had been whis-

pered through with, Lucinda observed a strange pallor overspreading his features, which alarmed her. It matters not how long death may have been looked for, it appears to come suddenly at the last. Lucinda hastily called Marion, who came quickly, and, bending over him on the opposite side, cried, "Pa, pa, can you speak to Marion?" The eyes opened again, and appeared to cast on each of them a look of recognition; but he did not speak.

"Pa, you are not alone. He is with you," called Lucinda, with a choking sob. They were both bending over him now, and each had a hand clasped in theirs. A low sound like "Yes" came from his parted lips. It was as if the departing spirit had paused to look back a moment and utter this final reassurance before passing into the unseen.

Then those eyes, so full of the light of love and everlasting hope, closed for ever on earth; and those daughters of the parsonage were alone with their dead and with their God. They hid themselves "in the secret of His presence."

VIII.

THE MESSAGE OF “THE OLD ORCHARD.”

TEN years after the death of Rev. Hiram Stafford some changes had taken place in the vicinity of “The Old Orchard.” Most of those persons whose names have been mentioned in this narrative still lived, but not all.

Neil McNair had taken his last journey. Before his departure, grace had so mellowed him that he could give clear testimony to that “guid hope o’ eternal life beyon’.” The neighbors said, “Neil was eccentric, but he was true. You could trust Neil; and we will miss him.”

Jack McNair had wedded Mary Munroe and had taken the post office store, where he entered upon a prosperous career as a rural merchant. Rory Clubb was found in his employ in the old capacity of peddler.

Joker Bohn had studied music for two years under the tuition of Mr. and Mrs. Robbs. It was not in Joker’s nature to allow any vindictive feelings to separate him from them. One day Mrs. Robbs said to him, “We can teach you no more, Joker. You have gone as far as we can instruct you. You must

now attend a college of music, if you wish to pursue your course further."

When Joker told Mrs. Medford, she replied: "This is the proof of your ability and diligence. I was looking forward to this. Dr. Clarke left five hundred dollars with me to assist in sending you to college, whenever you should be ready. If necessary, I shall add another five hundred, and you can repay me whenever your earnings will permit you to do so."

Joker exhausted his vocabulary of thanksgiving and gratitude in an endeavor to tell Mrs. Medford how deep were his obligations to all the kind friends who were assisting him, and especially to herself. "Yes, I will pay you back every dollar," he said; "and I will pay Dr. Clarke, too, if he will take it from me. I never expected such a chance of going up in the world. Just think, to be called 'Professor Bohn,' and to be leader in some large city church choir! I will. I'm going to reach that. I'll work harder than ever, and save every dollar I can." Then he laughed outright in an ecstasy of bright anticipations. After a few moments Mrs. Medford said:

"Joker, you know who has really done all these things for you. His word says, 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path.'"

"I have not forgotten that," said Joker soberly. "I am sure he has directed my path. I am going to let Him do it, for He does it so well."

The ties that bound Mrs. Medford's heart to "The Old Orchard" slackened somewhat after the departure of her children. Although she continued to reside

there until Arthur had graduated, she did not retain control. Mr. Blackrock was given the charge of her entire estate, and in his second stewardship he proved more faithful than he had been in the first.

Not many months after the death of Mr. Stafford, Dr. Sam's long absent brother returned. He had been sailing on the lakes and had attained the position of Captain. Within a year of his return, Lucinda Stafford became his wife, and they took up their residence in Detroit. Marion also went there and took a position in a large printing firm. After vigorous, up-to-date articles from the fertile pen of "Tidy Tilly" had gained her a reputation, she became a regular contributor in one department of the paper. Her taste for journalism now received some gratification as well as reward. But, in the settlement of a life profession, early associations create certain aptitudes that must be taken into consideration. Little by little, Marion was drawn into the activities of benevolent work, for which so many openings occur in a great city. After three years she devoted herself to hospital work exclusively, in the capacity of professional nurse. About two years after entering upon this work, she was one day attending upon a critical surgical operation. Several eminent physicians were in attendance, and a small class of postgraduate students were admitted. Marion came face to face once more with Dr. Sam Martin, and in this unexpected manner their acquaintance was renewed.

Dr. Sam's career as a medical student had been

fully as brilliant as his most sanguine friends had looked for. Scholarships had come his way and the gold medal at the end of his course had marked him out as a very probable candidate for professorial honors. He assigned no reason in particular to his friends for spending two years in various cities of the United States and Great Britain among the hospitals, but in reality he was revolving another project in his mind which the generosity of his heart prompted him to undertake. The Students' Volunteer Movement was beginning to make itself felt among the colleges. In the quiet meditative hours of his retirement after graduation, Dr. Sam had resolved that he would consecrate his life to the work. Many universities were giving their most brilliant students to the cause. Why should not Dr. Sam also go? He did go, to India, but he did not go alone. Marion Stafford also went. In a populous city, on the banks of the sacred river, they toil, like hundreds of others, amongst the millions of India, and now their highest ambition is satisfied in relieving pain and speaking words of comfort and hope.

Dr. Clarke and Kate had not returned to Canada. Occasional letters from Kate reached "The Old Orchard" however. After Arthur had graduated, his mother proposed that he should recuperate by taking a visit to Kate and her father. It was Arthur's first experience of the sea and of travel. He reached Ireland in splendid physical condition. Dr. Clarke had given up his home in the country and was residing in Belfast. The three, however, visited all the scenes of

his youth, and in various journeys to places of note the weeks flew by. It was a great surprise to them all when one day the servant announced a visitor whose card bore the name of "Dr. Terrence Varro."

"Terry the Merry" had indeed made his way through the medical course. He was travelling, and while in Belfast had sought out Dr. Clarke. Terry joined them in several short journeys, in which he threw gold and silver coins about like pence. The drivers of jaunting cars adored him and wondered at his liberality. One day he opened his heart to Arthur on a tender theme, and opened Arthur's eyes also. He loved Arthur's beautiful cousin. As a friend, could Arthur advise him? Would it be out of place, or wrong, or would it be proper, for him to propose marriage to Kate? Arthur knew of no reason why he might not marry his beautiful cousin—certainly try. Nevertheless, Arthur experienced some relief when Terry told him later that he had failed. Kate "loved another," but she had not disclosed the other's name.

A rumor had reached "The Old Orchard" that Kate was to marry a young Squire Sloan. Both Arthur and Terry had met him at Dr. Clarke's, and both were now convinced that the young Squire was the object of Kate's affection. Dr. Terrence Varro, with no suicidal intentions, passed on to the Continent and Arthur returned home.

When Arthur entered upon his first pastoral charge his mother accompanied him, and it was with a throbbing heart that she listened to his inaugural

sermon. Mother and son now drew closer together, for Arthur saw how much she leaned upon him.

A young pastor's first wedding is always an interesting event to him. With Arthur it was especially so, from the fact that he had to return to the vicinity of "The Old Orchard" to perform the ceremony. In the old home of the bride he pronounced Professor Bohn and Minerva Daysmore husband and wife.

When Arthur was taking their signatures, the Joker of a former day expressed himself again.

"Well, Arthur, times have changed a little for us both since I ran away from Mrs. Blackrock, after Minnie and I fell in love with each other."

"Indeed, I guess it was you that fell in love," replied the bride. "My part was more recent. Besides, Professor Bohn, I think you would act more discreetly if you would remember not to address me in company as 'Minnie.' It is scarcely dignified enough."

"Very well, Mrs. Bohn," replied her husband, gravely, "I shall try to remember that, seeing that you do not deny that you fell in love as deeply as I did myself, although at a later period. As for 'company,' I scarcely regard an old friend and an old bachelor like Arthur as 'company.'"

"You are rather irreverent, I think, in speaking of Mr. Medford as an 'old bachelor.' I am almost ashamed of you," replied his wife.

"Beg pardon, both of you. I meant no irreverence or courtesy, Minnie—"

"There now!" cried Minerva in a tone so sharp that it caused Joker to look very sober. "What have

I just told you about your manner of addressing me ? You forget very soon."

" Well, but are we in company now ? " asked Joker, " or is this a private gathering. Which is it, Arthur ? "

" I suppose, " replied Arthur, laughing, " that depends on whether or not you consider me of sufficient social importance to be called company. You do not appear to hold old bachelors in high esteem."

" You're right, I don't, " said Joker, laying down a cheque for fifty dollars and taking up the marriage certificate.

" You will allow me to present this to Mrs. Bohn, " said Arthur, taking up the cheque.

" I will leave that matter to her, " replied Joker. " Have you any objections, Minnie—I mean Mrs. Bohn ? " he asked, looking toward his wife.

Mrs. Bohn could not repress a smile at her husband's humorous forgetfulness ; but she answered, " I never refuse anything good, even though Professor Bohn is too demonstrative with his money, and Mr. Medford is too generous."

" That's the reason you did not refuse me. It's a good rule. Keep to that, Minnie—a—Mrs. Bohn." But Mrs. Bohn had taken the cheque from Arthur's hand and had run out of the door with a shrill, merry laugh.

Then Joker turned to Arthur and said, " Don't you think I've made a good bargain to-day ? Minnie—I mean Mrs. Bohn—will be a grand wife for me."

" You'll never make as good a bargain again, Joker,"

replied Arthur, smiling. "I believe you got the best of the bargain to-day."

"I generally do, and I think you are right," said Joker, breaking into a laugh. Then, more soberly, he said: "But I'm glad it's over with, and we are married. There's a lot of fuss and worry about getting married, too. I never thought there would be so much when I struck out for it. When a man asks his girl, taking all the chances of a refusal (but I was pretty sure of Minnie), and then asks her mother and father (and that's harder yet); and lastly, goes to ask the preacher to come and perform the ceremony—why, it's all asking, and really, Arthur, it's rather exhausting. I had an awful time getting Minnie's mother to understand what I was after. You would have thought she had never seen me before; couldn't catch on with a hint; no, not for anything! I tell you a man would need to find married life much better to be compensated for all his trouble. By the way, Arthur, when is your own case coming up?"

Arthur had stretched his hands upward over his head, and was leaning back in his chair laughing with all the might of him at Joker.

"I suppose you are in a good position to keep a wife now, Joker?" he replied, evading the question.

"Well, I ought to be," replied Joker. "My position as leader in St. Margaret's brings me eight hundred a year, besides all the income from my pupils, concerts, etc., which is good for eight hundred more. But that is not answering my question about your affairs."

"Oh, I am young yet, Joker," answered Arthur.

"I am not thirty yet. Then I have mother with me, so I am well cared for."

"I can testify that you will be well cared for when you have her with you. But all the same it seems to me you are hanging around too long. I am five years younger than you," answered Joker.

"The way in which you have reviewed the difficulties of getting married almost discourages me from ever making any move that way," said Arthur, smiling again. Besides, I was not so fortunate early in life as you were."

"That's it," said Joker. "Some men cannot see how fortunate they are. You would think their eyes were in their heels. I was fortunate, and I was sharp enough to see it. There is the difference. You can't see, or do not want to see, how fortunate you are."

"I do not understand you, Joker," said Arthur; "that is, in what you say about me."

"I see you don't," said Joker reproachfully. "I always thought you wore your hair too long. It prevents you from discovering nice points, and you have studied too much astronomy for your own good."

"Stop talking in a parabolic way, Joker, and say what you mean in plain English," said Arthur.

"It's more diabolic than parabolic, I think," said Joker, "when a man can't see that a woman worships the ground he walks on."

"Joker, you do not mean to say that any woman cares that much for me, except it be my mother," said Arthur, now interested.

"There you are again, Arthur," said Joker. "Surely you know I do not need to say that about her."

"Then who in the world do you mean?" asked Arthur, now quite sober.

"I mean the girl in Ireland," almost shouted Joker, putting on his sternest look. "I mean the girl who was one of the truest and best friends I ever had. I mean Kate, call her what else you will."

"Joker," said Arthur, in a low voice, "I see you are in earnest. Who told you what you now tell me?"

"Dr. Terrence Varro told me," replied Joker. "He said that both you and he were mistaken about some young Squire, whom you supposed to be Kate's lover. The Squire was married shortly after you left. Dr. Varro said there was no one else but you in Kate's mind."

"You gentlemen will please come to dinner," said Mr. Daysmore, appearing at the door, and the conversation ended.

When Arthur and his mother returned to his charge they found a letter from Kate informing them that she and her father had decided to visit them in about a month.

But close upon the letter came a cablegram to Arthur, which ran: "Father dead; received a stroke. Come for me, Arthur."

Before Arthur left he had a long talk with his mother. He repeated what Joker had told him. Mrs. Medford's reply was characteristic:

"Arthur, if you and Kate love each other, I see no

reason why you ought not to marry. If you do you shall have my blessing. Yes, I would love to have Kate with me again."

Within a month Arthur was with Kate again. In the meantime she had got her business almost all settled, so that there was little need for delay. "I think we may return by the next steamer," she said to Arthur, about ten days after his arrival. "I am so glad you came for me."

"I also am glad that I came for you, Kate," replied Arthur. "But I want you to take a much longer journey with me. I want you to go with me all through life. I love you, Kate, and I have some reason to hope you may reciprocate my love. I have told mother. She knows it all."

"Arthur, I have never forgotten Dr. Sam's advice to me, 'Always be true,'" answered Kate. "I think I do not violate it in telling you that I love you. My heart does not condemn me. I will go with you to our old home, and I will go with you all through life, if you think me worthy, and I shall try always to be true."

In a large house, erected as a refuge for homeless and indigent creatures, for those fallen through drink or by lust, and for those who had never been capable of caring for themselves—in this house a room was assigned to a lonely woman who made application for shelter. All her belongings were carried in a trunk, which was deposited in her room. She lived only about three months after entering this large

house, and the time was passed in melancholy and despondency. When she was dead, they opened her trunk and found a black brocaded silk dress and a few other worn articles of clothing, but no jewellery or money. The body was clothed for burial in this fitting vestment, and laid in a plain pine coffin, dark stained ; then it was drawn in a heavy wagon out to the grave plot, back two fields in the farm connected with the house. Heavens ! How bare and brown that grave plot looked ! There were no women among the mourners. A horribly strange company of men, inmates of the house, made up the irregular procession. One shuddered to look at them ! Bloated, bleared, simple-minded and deformed ! Most of them in such a condition on account of strong drink, withal a fit procession of mourners for one who had helped to bring them to such condition.

We looked along the row of lonely bare graves, some of them newly made in the red-brown sandy soil, some covered with the brown grass of a year ago. No stones marked who lay there, and few ever inquired who might be buried in this "potter's field." One thing we were sure of, many of them were the graves of drunkards. Where had the spirits departed to ? Once they were bright boys and girls, whom some mother loved and fondled. They were, perchance, blithe young men and women. But drink caused them to be laid here. Drink ! Drink ! Drink !

How long, I ask, how long shall this work go on ? How long shall we permit men to continue a traffic in the bodies and souls of men, that only prepare

them for eternal night ? Stand among the graves of departed drunkards, consider the vast army coming forward to fill graves beside them ; meditate upon the solemn possibilities of the world to come—then deny if you can, if you dare, that it is time this work of iniquity should cease !

"The Old Orchard" trees still stand, and year by year give forth their fructiferous wealth. As I wander among them once more, I observe that they have grown large, irregular, knotted. The symmetry of youth is departed. Spring has come, and has lifted the covering from sleeping nature. She has gone forth upon carpets of yellow dandelion and green. Massive vernal bouquets pour aromas upon the breezes that call millions of busy honey-gatherers to bear away their hidden treasures. The trees of "The Old Orchard" have unfolded their generous bloom once more. Under the spell of their beauty and silence I drop into meditation. Is there a Presence here ? Or do the trees whisper ?

A thought of those who once dwelt here steals in upon me, and then a thought of the life they have entered into — the land of eternal spring — the river of water clear as crystal—the tree of life that grows upon its banks. The resurrection of those who shall be counted worthy.

My heart is hushed in a silent joy. The trees have whispered to me with those delicate lips of pink and white bloom, and this is the message that they have silently borne to my listening heart : "Purity is immortality."

